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AN UNCONSCIOUS CRIME

BY DR. N. T. OLIVER

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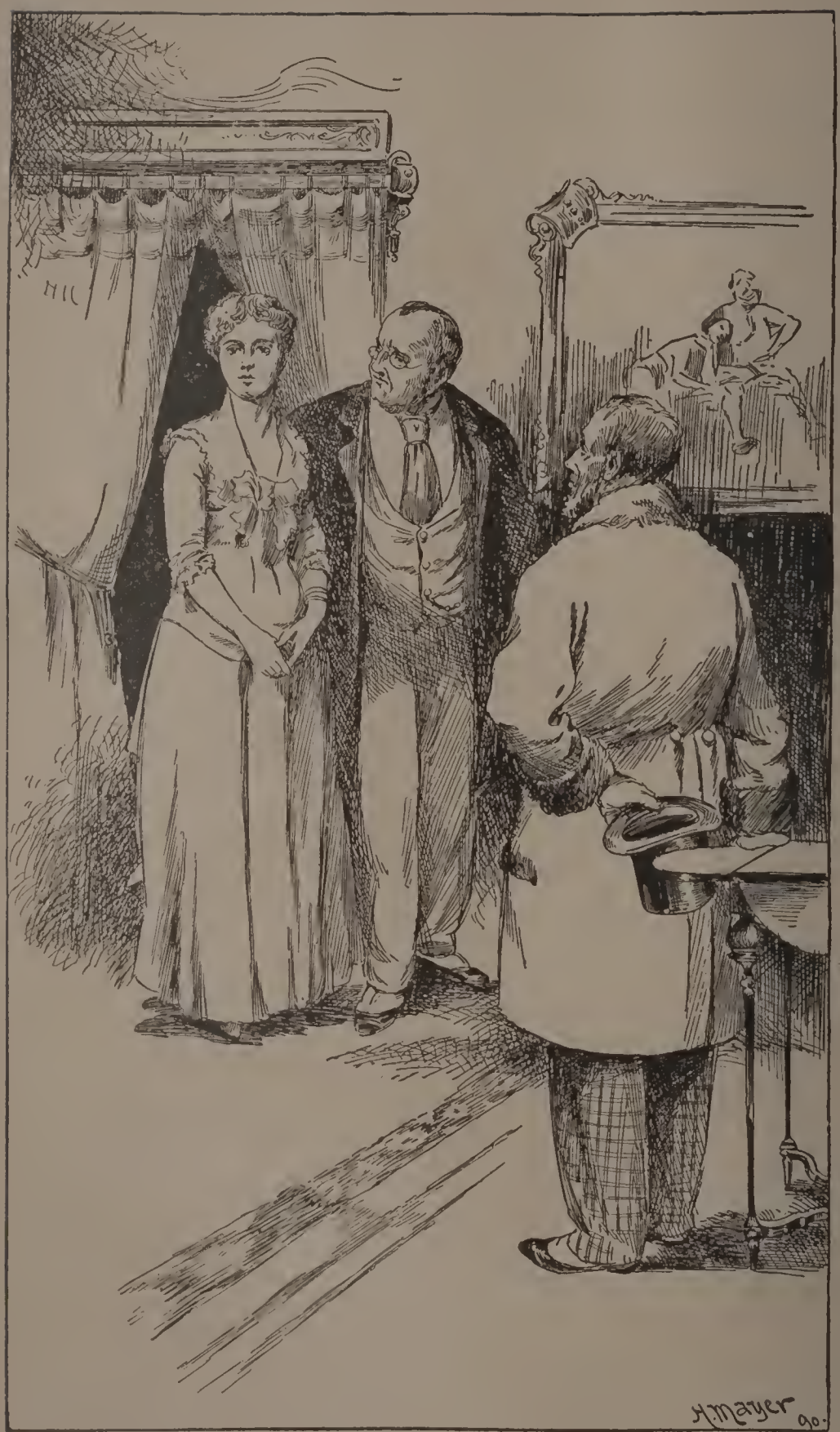
1891

AN UNCONSCIOUS CRIME



"THIS IS YOUR UNCLE, AGNES."—Page 9.

THE LIBRARY OF CHOICE FICTION

AN UNCONSCIOUS CRIME

A NOVEL

By DR. N. T. OLIVER

Author of "Angel and Devil," "The King of Gold," Etc.

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CHICAGO
LAIRD & LEE, PUBLISHERS
1891

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AN UNCONSCIOUS CRIME

PROLOGUE

CHAPTER I

BACK INTO THE WORLD AGAIN

Boom! sounded the iron notes of the clock in the stone tower.

Solemnly clanging, from one up to ten; awakening the slumbering echoes, and informing all within hearing that the night was hastening on toward the midnight hour. The moon, hidden ever and anon by scurrying clouds of blackness, gave but little light; but what public illuminating power it afforded served to bring into bold relief the gloomy walls, spiked at the top, and the still gloomier buildings of the asylum for the insane, ably managed by Dr. Roberts, and located at B———.

Within those walls of granite, dwelt nearly three hundred souls, whose vital power of reason had departed. In some forever; others, still feebly striving to gain the supremacy over eternal oblivion.

Shrieks of despair, groans of anguish, cries of maniacal glee had often gone up from the many stone cells whose iron doors shut out these poor mad creatures from the world, and whose padded

walls prevented any of them from consigning to everlasting darkness the casket from whose depths the precious gem had been removed.

Ten o'clock, and the occupants of a carriage, being rapidly driven toward the gloomy building, looked out of the window on either side, and saw the outlines of the asylum. "We are nearing our destination," said one, a man, probably of fifty, to his companion, a lady.

"I supposed as much," she simply answered; "I perceived the building as I glanced out of the window." And she slightly shuddered as she drew more tightly about her shoulders the fur-lined cir cular which she wore.

"A gloomy enough looking establishment," continued the man. "Enough to drive the wits out of one."

The lady made no answer.

"I wonder if she is really safe," mused the gentleman. "The physician in sending me word stated that she was recovered sufficiently to remove her. I hope he is sure."

The carriage stopped.

"We are here, sir," said the driver, appearing at the door.

"Well and good," answered the gentleman. "Suppose you ring the bell if there is one connected with the institution. The hour is late. There may be some difficulty in gaining admission."

The driver bowed, and the next moment the occupants of the carriage heard the tinkling of a little

bell. He had found it without trouble. They waited fully ten minutes.

"Ring it again," said the gentleman impatiently.

"Ting-a-ling-ding-dong-ding" sounded the annunciator. The sound of footsteps reached their ears. The second attempt had been more successful. A rasping sound, as of a rusty key being turned in a rustier lock, and a small gate opened, allowing a ray of light, proceeding from a lantern in the hands of a sleepy looking individual, to shine out upon the road.

"What is it," growled he of the lantern.

"Is Dr. Roberts within?" inquired the gentleman.

"Yes, but its after visitin' hours," answered the man, sullenly.

The gentleman quickly descended from the carriage, and walked toward the gate.

"See here my man," he said quickly. "My business here to-night is important. I would hardly come at this hour simply to visit your delightful institution. I must see Dr. Roberts to-night; so take my card to him, and then open those large gates and admit us."

The fellow took the card and glanced at it with no amiable manner. But he disappeared with it in his hand, and the giver stood awaiting his return.

The driver had remounted his box and was quietly smoking a pipe, speaking a word, now and then, to his restive horses.

A repetition of the rasping, creaking sound, only

much louder, and the large gates swung back on their hinges.

"Dr. Roberts will see you," growled the porter, as he held up his lantern so the driver could see his way, the moon being under a cloud. "I thought so," muttered the gentleman, resuming his seat in the carriage. "Git up!" called the driver to his horses, and the vehicle rolled through the open gates and up the wide gravel walk to the door of the asylum.

The grumbling porter closed the gates and then threw himselt, full length, upon a bench, which stood by the gate, to await the return of the carriage.

Dr. Roberts stood in the open door way as the carriage rolled up to the door.

"Mr. Barton, I believe," he said, looking at the card, which he held in his hand, to the male occupant of the vehicle, as he ascended the steps.

"My name, sir. I come in answer to a communication received from you regarding the child of my brother, Agnes Barton, I speak of."

The Doctor looked puzzled.

"We have no such inmate," he answered.

"Oh! I had forgotten. The girl has been married. Probably she was entered under her married name, Greyson.''

"Ah, yes; I remember now. But come in. Are you alone?" and the doctor looked inquiringly at his visitor.

"No, my wife accompanies me; but I hardly think she cares to become acquainted with the interior

of your institution. Womanly feeling, you know."

"Ah yes—nervous—this way, sir," and the doctor showed the way to an elegantly furnished reception room.

"Now, sir, to get through with this business as soon as possible. I want to ask you several questions, which you will kindly answer fully; then I can thoroughly understand matters and not keep you from your bed," and the visitor, John Barton, sat erect in the easy chair, which the doctor had placed in position for him upon entering the apartment. The physician bowed.

"I shall endeavor to satisfy you, sir," he said.

"You wrote me that the daughter of Alonzo Barton, my brother, (who died of a broken heart a few months since,)was as well as she could ever be; and that a continuance of treatment in her case was unnecessary—in fact, uesless."

"I stated facts, sir."

"Then I am to infer from that that she has recovered the use of her mind."

"Not entirely, sir; and I doubt if she ever will. When I took charge of this establishment, some two years since, my predecessor, Dr. George, called my particular attention to this case. 'She has some great trouble,' he said, 'and will probably never recover her mind completely, but by proper treatment she may be brought to a comparatively sane condition again, in which she can have perfect cognizance of her surroundings, be able to control her actions to a great extent, but will ever

be afflicted with great melancholy.' And that, sir, is her present condition."

"But she is safe?" and the visitor looked almost ludicrous in his anxiety.

The doctor smiled.

"Perfectly," he answered. "She is of a very gentle disposition, and has ever proved tractable, if I understand it properly; she has never been violent, and was not sent here to be subdued, but rather in hopes that under our treatment the gentle mind, wrecked by some trouble, might be strengthened and she restored to health once more."

"And you can do nothing more?"

"Nothing. Only Providence can fully restore to her the memory of other days, for they are now lost to her entirely."

"It is probably better so," muttered John Barton. "It is better that she should never comprehend the utter depravity of one who should have been her dearest companion."

The doctor sat down. He had been standing.

"Pardon me," he said. "I have never known Mrs. Greyson's story. You must know that Dr. George, the former manager, himself became crazed, through deep study, as to the best means of curing his helpless patients, and died a short time after I arrived here. I was to have been his assistant, you know. Assuming the management after his decease, consequently there is much about the former life of the patient that I am in ignorance of. Would it be

asking too much if I were to request you to inform me as to the cause of her insanity?"

John Barton remained silent; at last he spoke.

"No; I shall take her from this place to-night, and you will probably never meet her again, (as I live in a distant city.) I don't suppose it will harm her to grant your request. The story in full is very long; so I will condense it. Agnes Barton was the only child of my brother Alonzo. She married when but a child, a man old enough to have been her father. We never knew why she did so. Her father objected; but she was a pet, being the only child, and so had her own way about it. They lived very happily for a year, at the end of which time a child was born to them; a boy. But the demon of jealousy took possession of her husband's soul. He saw her in the company of one who had been her lover in the early days of childhood, and foolishly imagined that his young wife did not care for him.

It went from bad to worse, until finally, one night, my brother was surprised at the abrupt entrance of his son-in-law, who declared that he had detected his wife in criminal association with the suspected party, and had cast her off; and before my brother could recover himself he had gone, and had taken the child with him. The young wife, who fairly worshipped her husband, was found wandering about the house, in an aimless manner.

"My husband has left me, father," she said, as he accosted her. Her eyes were dry. She seemed

strangely calm, but the next day she was a raving maniac. Hearing of the great success that Dr. George had made with others, my brother decided to send her here under his care. The rest you know. This is the story as it was given to me. I was not in this country at the time, and to tell you the truth have never seen my niece."

The doctor remained in deep thought for some time after John Barton had concluded, a puzzled expression resting upon his brow.

"A singular coincidence," he muttered.

"What," cried John Barton.

"Oh!" cried the doctor, recovering himself, "I was not aware that I spoke. Your relation of Mrs. Greyson's history created some surprise in my mind; for the reason that her case so closely resembles that of a lady who was dismissed this morning, a Mrs. Atkinson. I learned the facts concerning her case shortly after my arrival here, and now that I hear those concerning your niece, I see that they are precisely similar; even to the state of the mind at the present time."

"That is strange," mused the gentleman. "You say Mrs. Atkinson was discharged this morning?"

"Yes, she left in company with a father of the Catholic faith, in which she is a devout believer."

"Those things will happen some times. I mean these singular coincidences. I suppose that men are much the same the world over, and it certainly would be strange if my unfortunate niece was of all women alone in her particular trouble. The

fact of there being similar cases in one institution creates surprise in our minds. Outside of that there is nothing unprecedented."

The doctor bowed and excusing himself hurried from the room to prepare the subject of their conversation for her immediate departure. John Barton paced the floor until the sound of approaching footsteps was heard without, and the next moment the doctor ushered in one of the loveliest creatures he had ever seen.

A fair young girl not seeming over twenty years of age, although she must have been at least eight years older, with short, crispy, curling hair, which covered her small, well formed head. A sweet mouth, curved like Cupid's bow, but which gave the impression of deep melancholy, there being a pensive droop in the corners. The nose purely Grecian. The eyes a deep, dark blue, and from their depths shone such a look of eager entreaty, of anxious expectancy, that it touched John Barton's heart to the core.

"This is your uncle, Agnes," said the doctor. "We always address our patients by their first name," he continued, as he saw his visitor looking at him rather quizzically.

The afflicted one looked at him. "Yes. My uncle," she said, as if repeating a lesson.

"He comes to take you to his home," the doctor continued.

"To his home?" and the fair one turned her wandering, soulful eyes full upon the old gentleman.

"Yes, Agnes," said Barton. "I have come to take you to my home. Your aunt awaits you in a carriage outside."

The woman hurried to his side and took his hand.

"And will you love me?" she cried in an eager voice.

The old gentleman put his arm about her waist.

"Yes, my poor child. First for your father's sake; always for your own, for you have suffered much; but that is over now."

"Over now," she repeated in a soft voice, nestling the curly head upon the other's breast. "I will go with you," she added quickly.

A servant in livery entered the room. "The lady's things are ready, sir," he said respectfully to the doctor.

The physician led the way to the door. "Farewell Agnes," he said as his former patient passed through the doorway.

"Farewell, Doctor," came the low, sweet answer.

Down the steps to the waiting carriage. A greeting of motherly kindness from the lady inside the coach.

The trunk containing the wardrobe sent to the asylum ten long years before, was strapped on behind, and then, with a faint, rumbling sound, the carriage passed out of sight in a turn of the path, and the clanging of the gate proclaimed that it had passed out into the world. The driver chirruped to his horses. The sleepy porter relocked the gate

with the rusty key, amidst much growling, and the doctor returned to his reception room, and with his head resting upon his hand sat there in deep thought for many hours. Then, with a sigh and a hasty glance at the clock, he hurried to bed.

And she of whom he thought was driven through the silent night far, far out of his life!

CHAPTER II

TWO MEN MEET

"My God, Hubert, is this you?"

"I fail to recognize you, sir. It is scarcely likely that we have met before."

"Nonsense! You know me, Henry Rodney." A sharp cry of anguish, then an exclamation of rage, and he who had been called Hubert had seized the other by the throat.

"Damn you! To mention that name and expect to live; that name which has caused the misery, the unhappiness of my life! You hound. I should kill you where you are."

A brief struggle and the man assailed had freed himself and stood arranging his disordered clothing, while gazing at the other ruefully; while he, with panting breath and gleaming eyes looked like some fiend incarnate.

They had met upon a mountain path, outside of Manitou, Colorado. The younger man, Henry Rodney, was evidently a tourist, his dress being of that

style adopted by wanderers in search of recreation, curiosity, or health.

A fine specimen of manhood, truly. Tall, broad shouldered, with light waving hair, which he wore longer than the fashion of most men. A full beard, cut short, imparted a look of age to a face that would otherwise have looked young. He could not have been over thirty at the outside, but he appeared older.

His assailant was much older; possibly a man of forty-five or eight. A noble looking, massive specimen of humanity, one who impressed all who came in contact with him with the idea of the king of beasts, the lion. Noble in appearance, kind when left alone, terrible when aroused to anger. The younger man looked at the other dubiously.

"I cannot understand you" he said, brushing his pantaloons. "I have but returned to my native country, after a long sojourn in Europe, and when, while exploring the beauties of my own land, I suddenly run across one who in days of yore was my dearest friend. He seizes me by the throat, and nearly strangles me, while he cries aloud that my name has been the cause of misery and unhappiness. Will you, my friend, be kind enough to explain your actions?"

The other approached him.

"Your effrontery is only equalled by your villainy," he said. But bah! I shall not soil my hands in attempting to punish you. The day has passed. It

is all over now. Only keep out of my way." The young man looked puzzled.

"Look here, Hubert ——"

"Not that name!" interrupted the other. "That, with my past, is buried in oblivion. My name is Hubert Andrews. All here know me. I have lived here twelve years."

"Well, you are decidedly mysterious about it. What have you done—committed murder, or forgery, or what?"

"You, sir, have been the cause of it all. Can you not imagine why I have changed my name, dragged in the dust by you, and —— one that I loved. Disgraced and dishonored by one who should have taken the greatest pride in it, and assumed another, cleaner and free from calumny! You, of all others, should understand this."

"By the old Harry, I don't, though. Every word you utter but increases my astonishment. If you are now Hubert Andrews, all right; but after your assault to-day, which I would not brook from any other, and your strange language, I think it but right that you should explain yourself."

The elder man sprang toward him.

"For God's sake, Rodney, don't tempt me too far with your pretended ignorance. I may forget myself and do you bodily harm in my passion. Leave me; keep out of my way. I cannot easily forget."

The young man's face fell.

"Well, if you wish it," he commenced slowly. "I will do as you desire. But it is hard to meet an

old friend, after so many years, and then receive such a greeting. Why, do you know, when I saw and recognized you, there came to my heart a great feeling of joy. I pictured to myself many days of pleasure, spent in your society, and that of your wife——"

The other's face grew livid.

"Mention not her name," he cried hoarsely, interrupting him. "Speak not of her. I have no wife."

An expression of great sympathy came to Henry Rodney's features. "Pardon me," he said. "I underststand all now. She is dead, and her loss has turned your heart to stone. Pardon me," he repeated. "I pity you, Hubert; I do indeed."

Huge drops of sweat stood out upon the other's face.

"My God, man," he cried in anguish. "Why will you persist in torturing me! You of all others should know that it is not her death that causes the change. No—No! Better that! It is dishonor, falsehood, loss of womanly self respect that has wrecked my life."

The young man's face grew stern. His kindly eyes flushed with rising anger.

"Do you mean to say that your wife proved untrue; that she, the sweetest, fairest, truest of all living creatures, forgot her honor; sacrificed her virtue?" and the clear, manly voice rang out on the balmy air of the afternoon.

"Yes I do; and I mean to say that you, the man I trusted, proved her worst friend, her seducer."

"Then I say to you, Hubert—Andrews, as you choose to call yourself, that you lie!"

The elder man fell back in astonishment. He seemed powerless to act.

"You give me the lie," he gasped. "You dare to tell me I lie!"

"Yes, I dare; and what is more, I now demand a full and complete explanation, or I shall hold you to account! Your wife never looked upon me as other than a brother; a dear friend; nothing more. When I parted from her twelve years ago she was happy in the love of a husband whom she adored; and now, upon my return, I meet that husband and he accuses her of the basest crime known to man, and includes me in the accusation. This is no little thing. It must be explained."

The other sat upon a log, which lay by the side of the narrow path.

"Can it be true," he whispered, as if to himself. "Can it be that I have been mistaken? But no. I saw with my own eyes. I could not have been deceived."

"Saw what?" demanded the stern voice of his companion.

"Saw you, on the night of the twenty-third day of April, twelve years ago, clasp my wife to your bosom, while you rained kisses upon her upturned face. Heard her sobs and declarations of love for you, as she bemoaned her unhappy fate, being linked to a man she did not love. Heard your consoling words. Saw and heard it all, Henry Rodney! I could not have been mistaken,"

He had risen during the latter part of his speech, and was now pacing the rocky path.

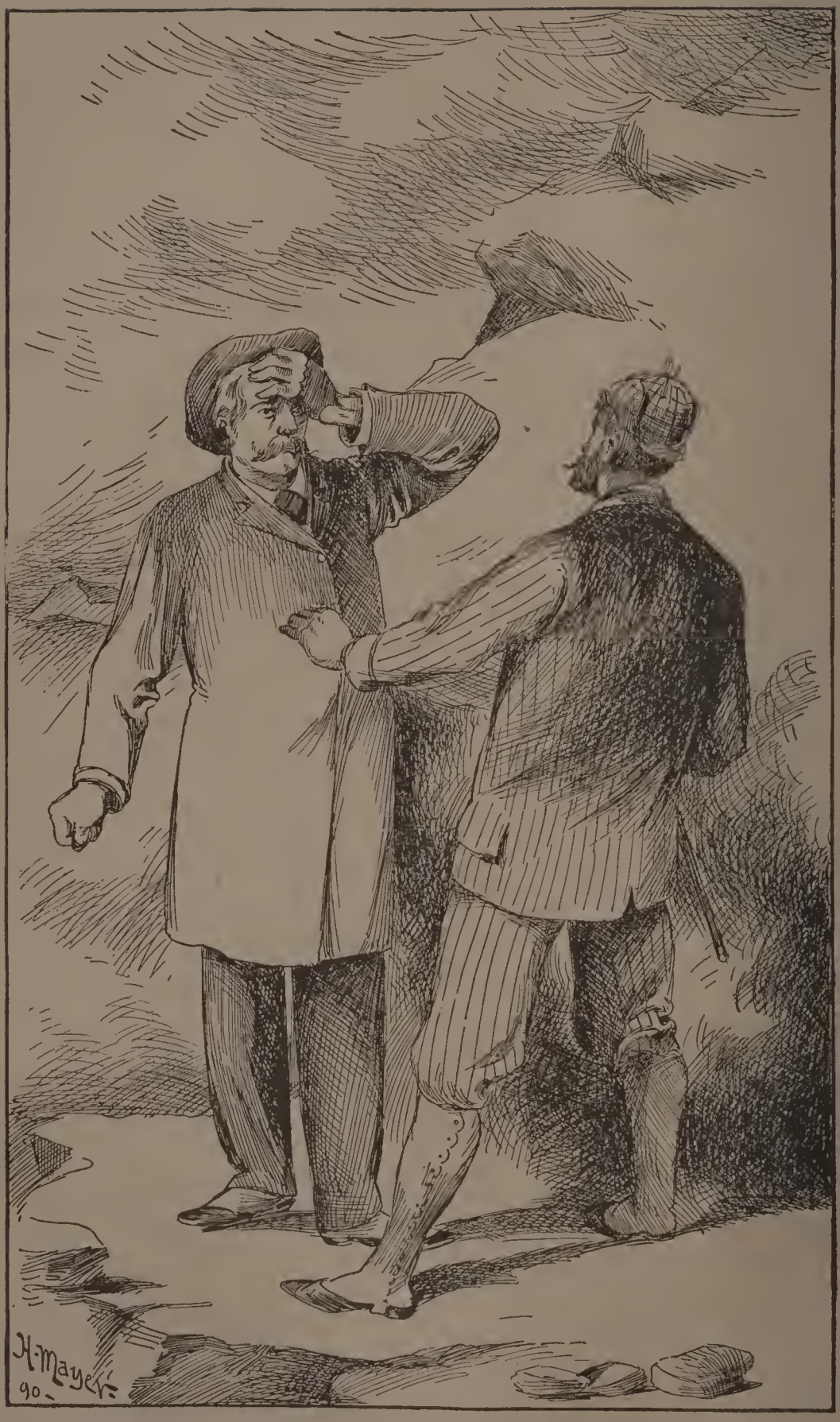
Henry Rodney came to his side, and stood in his path. His face had grown sad.

"I understand it all now," and his voice had grown soft and low. "Sit upon this log, my poor, unhappy friend, and listen."

The other did his bidding.

"You were terribly mistaken that night. Right in one thing, wrong in the other. In order to explain to your mind the truth of my words, I must reveal to you the one secret of my family. In the days gone by we were very poor. My father, mother, sister and I. So poor in fact, that often we were obliged to go to bed hungry. My father seemed singularly unfortunate. Fortune seemed to have turned from him and, to make matters worse, mother died.

"After mother's death, father became a changed man; from a kind loving parent who loved his children and would have willingly sacrificed all for their happiness, he grew stern and harsh, and seemed to turn from us. My sister and I were obliged to find employment, for he rated us at all times as being drawbacks to his rise in the world. My sister, God bless her, obtained work as a book-keeper in a large wholesale hardware establishment, where she slaved her young life away, morning and night, and to cap the climax, the senior partner of the firm became attracted by her fresh young beauty and persecuted her with offers of marriage.



"GOD HELP ME! WHAT CAN I DO?"—Page 19.

"I say persecuted her, for he was an old man, with a heart as hard as the wares he dealt in, and she could not love him. She came to my father one night and told him all, saying she could stay there no longer.

"To our surprise, he grew very angry, reproached her as an ungrateful child who would see him struggling in poverty rather than assist him to rise, when a favorable opportunity presented itself. In conclusion he said: 'If Mr. Warden asks you to marry him again, I shall expect you to accept, and be thankful that such a chance is offered you.'

"My sister, appalled at the effect of her confidence, drew back in horror.

"But I do not love him, father," she cried.

"Nonsense," answered this harsh parent. "That is not necessary. Only fools indulge in that luxury. We cannot afford it."

"But I love another," she said meekly.

"My father's rage knew no bounds.

"You are not of age," he fumed. "And I will not allow you to marry any other. If you dare to disobey me, I shall curse you as an ungrateful, undutiful child."

"I tried to conciliate him, showing him how such a marriage, although it might bring wealth, would certainly produce unhappiness.

"My words but increased his anger and it was with a sorrowful heart that my darling sister and I went to our beds that night. To make a long story

short, she married Warden, and the most unhappy results followed. He was an ignorant, arbitrary, jealous wretch, and went so far at last as to forbid her from visiting or even seeing me, her brother.

"The servants were instructed to watch her, and you can imagine the unhappy life she led. But in spite of the eyes ever upon her, she managed to meet me often, and my blood would fairly boil with rage when she would tell me of the harsh, inhuman treatment she was obliged to endure. Our meeting place was in the park, usually at night.

"At last fortune seemed to smile upon me. I obtained a lucrative position, in a house who wished me to go to England and stated that I must go at once. I managed to send word to my sister and she met me that night at our usual trysting place. That meeting you saw, for it was the night you mentioned. My sister was of the same size as your wife, and in the darkness could easily have been mistaken for her, and now that I have told you all, to the truth of which I swear before heaven, may God forgive you if you have done aught in your jealous anger that has brought sorrow upon one of the dearest, best women upon earth."

His companion had buried his face in his hands. At the concluding words of Rodney's explanation he looked up and the young man drew back in horror at the look of stony despair that he saw in his eyes.

"If your words are true, Henry Rodney, I have much to answer for. I can never be forgiven. God

help me, what can I do? I have bruised the heart that beat for me only. Have crushed the tender flower whose fragrance filled my life. What can I do? What can I do?" and a bitter sob of unutterable anguish shook the massive frame. Rodney took the trembling hand. "It may yet be all right," he said softly. "What have you done with her?" "Acted the part of a brute," cried the unhappy man, rising to his feet.

"In the first impulse of devilish jealousy, I hurried to the home that I thought dishonored. To my surprise, I saw her sewing in the lamp-light. She looked up with a bright smile of welcome. I became filled with ungovernable rage. She whom I had seen but a short hour since, and who had managed to reach home before myself, probably by means of a hack, I thought, to look up into my face, with a smile upon the lips I had lately seen ravished by your kisses, and bid me welcome. In a voice thick with passion I told her what I had seen, accusing her of the most detestable crimes, and while the sweet face grew pale and set and the beautiful eyes grew hard and stony in despair, I cast her from me. Heeding not her words, and going to the crib, where sweetly slumbering in childish innocence lay our boy, I seized the child and hurried from the house."

The young man's face grew stern again.

"Indeed the part of a brute," he said coldly. "And she?"

"I have never seen her since. Nor have I heard

one word relative to her. The boy is with me, now nearly thirteen years of age, knowing only a fond father's love, happy with me."

The young man paced the rocky path with rapid strides.

"You have been a fool, man!" he cried excitedly. "You have not only wrecked your own life but that of another, your wife. Upon the boy's character you have, in your hastiness, cast a blot, that it may take years to efface. Now listen to me: You must find that wife who may perhaps be even now no more. But you must seek until you find her, and then, telling her all, ask her forgiveness. Your boy must know his mother. Come. There is no time to waste. It must be done at once," and he seized the arm of the older man in a strong grip.

"She will never forgive," groaned the other.

"I could not blame her if she did not," answered Henry Rodney. "But that remains to be seen. Come!"

And linking his arm in that of the other, he hurriedly led the way down the mountain path, to the town below.

Night was fast approaching as they commenced their descent. They parted at Rodney's hotel to meet in a short time.

"A letter for you, Mr. Rodney." The landlord obsequiously presented it—a letter in a strange hand writing. The young man tears it open and reads it. Then sitting at the table he answers it and sees it posted.

CHAPTER III

THE FATAL SHOT

The "Big Deal" was in full blast.

The "Big Deal" was the name bestowed upon one of the numerous gambling hells with which Manitou abounded. And truly it was the largest and most prosperous of them all. The "Big Deal" was not fastidious as to the class of customers who patronized its tables. Gentlemen tourists from the big hotels, cowboys, Mexicans, Chinese, Indians, all jostled each other as they put their venture upon the revolving wheel or staked their money upon the turn of a card, or the cast of the die.

All games of chance were represented. There was ample opportunity to win, or lose, (which was more likely) in any manner the gambler felt inclined. I have often wondered at the fatal infatuation there is to some in the gaming table. I have seen men—shrewd, cunning, sharp business men, who seemed to cast all discretion to the wind when the glaring lights and tinsel of the gaudy gambling place attracted them and have persistently thrown away fortunes in a vain endeavor to win that which seemed like the "will o' the wisp," always near, seemingly within grasp, but which invariably eluded their anxious clutch,—Gold!

When will mankind stop to consider this one thing, and heed the vulgar, but infinitely true saying: "Never try to beat a man at his own game."

The proprietors of games of chance run the game

for profit to themselves, not for others. The reckless gambler says to himself: "There is a chance for me. I may be the lucky one. Some one must win. I shall certainly be that one at some time." And so he expends ten dollars in hopes of winning hundreds, and perhaps, occasionally, he may be successful. Then with a flushed air of triumph he says: "I knew it would come my way," not stopping to consider that he has probably thrown away twice as much as he has won before fortune had turned his way. The devotee of keno, that very fascinating game, buys his cards, which seldom cost him much, and eagerly marks off the numbers as they are called out by the dealers, and if among the hundreds who are equally as anxious as himself, he should chance to find himself the most fortunate, he congratulates himself upon his luck, and willingly pays the ten per cent. deducted by the bank. The bank only claims a percentage, that is all. It looks fair enough to the gamester, but some one must lose in order that this same percentage may be paid, and if the game is continued a sufficient length of time the percentage, small as it may be, eats up the entire winning. It is chance for the gambler; a surety for the bank. Others may lose, the bank always wins. It is even so with all games of chance, no matter how conducted.

The "Big Deal" was a model gambling house, conducted on truly strict business principles, (for the benefit of the proprietor.) In addition to the large hall where keno, faro, chuck-a-luck and rou-

lette were played, there were a number of smaller rooms, where social poker parties were accommodated. This truly American game, met with much favor among the patrons of the house, and usually the rooms, some twenty all told, were occupied.

On this particular night which we wish to record, the place was more than usually crowded. Every table was filled, the hurrying waiters being kept busy supplying liquid refreshment by which the thirst of the numerous patrons could be quenched. In room 12 a party were playing a stiff game of poker. They had come in early and were still playing, although it was nearly midnight. The room was not occupied by any, save the players, it being one of the private ones. The electric annunciator tinkled from the frame behind the door.

"No. 12," muttered the white aproned dispenser of liquid fire.

"They are going it at a great rate," remarked his assistant.

The waiter, who had hurried to answer the summons, now came to the bar.

"Two whiskies, one soda, one absinthe," he called out. "For No. 12," he added. "That fellow has drunk enough absinthe to drive him mad," said the bar tender, as he prepared to fill the order. But he filled it just the same. It made but little difference to him whether the drinker went mad or not, as long as he paid for what he ordered. It was not his place to warn him—merely to supply him. A young, handsome boy approached the bar.

"Have you seen my father?" he asked. The bartender looked curiously at the questioner.

"And who is your father?" he asked.

"Hubert Andrews. You should know him well enough. He comes here often."

The waiter winked suggestively at the man, and shook his head warningly.

"Haven't seen him to-night," gruffly answered he of the white apron, as he turned his back upon the boy.

An anxious look crossed the boy's expressive countenance, and he slowly walked away.

A bearded man, carefully draped in evening dress, had heard the boy's question, stepped up to him, and laid his hand upon his shoulder. The boy started.

"Are you Hubert Andrews' son?" inquired the stranger.

"Yes, sir. Can you tell me where I can find him?" and the large eyes looked up into the stranger's face.

"I too have been searching for him," answered the man. "I left him at nightfall near my hotel. I was to have met him within an hour. He failed to keep his appointment, and I have been looking for him everywhere." They took seats at a table hidden by a flowering orange tree in the corner.

"He is here in this building, somewhere," answered the boy, his anxious eyes moving about the place. "He comes here every night."

A pang shot through the other's heart.

A gambler! Probably to forget the fancied wrong that had embittered him toward all mankind, he had turned, for solace, to the fascinating card.

"Do you know my father?" came the boy's sweet voice, interrupting his thoughts.

"For years, my boy, we were dear friends. I met him again to-day, after twelve years' separation."

"What is your name, sir?"

"Henry Rodney."

A thoughtful expression came to the boy's eyes. "I don't remember ever hearing father speak of you," he said.

"Hardly likely," said Rodney, absently. "What is your name?" he continued. "Albert Andrews," answered the boy. "My father must be here somewhere," he said rising. "I am going to look for him."

"I will go with you, my boy!" exclaimed Rodney. "I wish to see him as well." They threaded their way through the dense throng. The boy silent and anxious; Henry Rodney vexed and sad.

He had left Hubert Andrews at the door of his hotel, he promising to return within an hour. He had waited long after that time; but the old friend had not returned.

Speaking of him to the landlord of the hotel, he observed a smile cross his lips as he directed him to the "Big Deal" as the most likely place to find him.

He had come and met the boy, a beautiful lad of thirteen, in whose dark eyes shone out the soul of

the wronged mother. He had heard from him that the father was in the habit of frequenting this place, and he felt, as before described, vexed at the man having no more stability of mind; sad that a noble life should be thrown away.

They had drawn near the private poker rooms. A waiter brushed past them as they approached the door of No. 12, and even as they were about to pass, opened it.

A glad cry, and Henry Rodney found himself drawn toward the door by his companion, and the next moment was in the room.

The boy had found his father. He sat opposite the door, with a pack of cards in his hands, a pile of greenbacks and silver before him, hatless, coatless, with wild eyes and disordered hair and beard. He did not see his son nor Rodney. He saw only the waiter.

"My absinthe," he cried hoarsely, as the waiter drew near.

"Here it is, sir," answered the man, handing the greenish liquor to him. "Excuse me, sir, but are you not drinking too much?" he continued respectfully.

A wild laugh, and the gambler had drank the maddening fluid.

"Too much!" he cried. "No. Not half enough! I am lucky when I drink absinthe. It fires my brain. It makes my heart jump with feverish joy. It brings the gold and silver to my side. I need it, too, for her. She whom I have wronged. I am

going to her, and I want gold. Do you hear? Gold! It is my deal. This pile before me must be increased;" and with feverish impatience he dealt the cards. His companions, two Americans who drank whisky, one Mexican who took nothing but soda, but who continually smoked cigarettes, glanced at each other significantly. They saw that the liquor was making their lucky opponent mad. The cards were dealt. The boy drew near his father's side, Rodney remaining as if spellbound by the door.

The nearly insane man glanced at his hand, and with a wild laugh staked his pile of money on its strength.

"Father," came the low, sweet voice of the boy. The man turned.

"Ah, Albert, my son. Don't interrupt me. Fortune is within my grasp."

"Come away, father," pleaded the boy.

"Don't interrupt me, I tell you," came the answer, harshly.

The boy drew back, frightened.

"I see you, Senor," said the Mexican calmly, "and raise you one thousand better."

The Americans dropped out.

"I see your thousand and raise you five thousand!" cried Andrews.

The Mexican staked the money.

"Ten thousand," he cried.

"Ten more!" and Hubert Andrews produced the money from an inside pocket. "I call you."

"Four kings and a queen."

"Not strong enough, Senor. Four aces and a Jack," and the Mexican drew the money toward him.

A groan of intense agony, and the massive head fell upon the table.

"Come home now, won't you father?" and the boy took the arm of the ruined man.

"Stand from me," shouted the father, throwing him aside. "You yellow skinned devil, you have robbed me," he shrieked. The next moment he had the Mexican by the throat.

"Curse you! Release me," gasped the man.

"Not until I have choked the life out of your black soul."

A pistol shot, a cry of pain, and Hubert Andrews staggered back to the floor.

"You have murdered him," cried Rodney, springing forward. "The Senor had better mind his own business," said the Mexican calmly, holding the still smoking revolver.

"He is my friend!" cried Rodney, and he had the man by the throat. The American sprang forward to separate them.

Too late! A smothered report, and Henry Rodney fell dead.

With a cry of horror, the American rushed out of the room.

The Mexican coolly pocketed the money, and made good his escape, just in time to evade the

crowd that now surged toward fatal No. 12, attracted by the pistol shots.

The bartender and the waiter raised Hubert Andrews' form and laid it upon a lounge upon one side of the room. He was not dead, but was wounded mortally.

The frantic cries of the son rang out above the din.

The wounded man opened his eyes. "My son!" he gasped.

"Here, father!"

"Must—speak—alone—leave us—"

"You had better have a doctor, sir," said the waiter.

"No—doctor—no use—must die—Go—leave my boy—with me."

They granted his wish.

"Hold my head—my boy—," gasped the dying man.

The weeping son did as he requested.

"There—that's better—I can't die—boy—until—you—know—all—"then with much effort, he told the boy the story of his mother, how he had wronged her. Described his meeting with Henry Rodney that day. Told him that he had come to the gambling house that night for the last time; that he had intended to depart for the east in the morning.

"Go—find—mother," he gasped. "Rodney knows. He—help you—" As he said these words his eyes, already growing dim, rested upon the prostrate form

of the man he had falsely accused. With a mighty effort he raised himself upon one arm.

"He—" pointing to the corpse— "Rodney—dead!"

The boy, awed, frightened, murmured "Yes."

The dying man fell back.

"If he is—innocent—I have killed him. If he—guilty, he is punished."

The boy knelt by the side of the only being on earth he loved.

"Oh, father," he moaned. "You must not leave me. What can I do? What will become of me?"

The kindly eyes opened.

"Go—find mother—" he whispered. "Name not —Andrews—mother's name——"

"What, father? Quick, tell me!"

"Mother's name——" a struggle, a vain attempt to articulate, and the head fell back, the eyes closed, a faint rattle in the throat, and the boy was an orphan.

With a heart-rending cry he threw himself upon he body of his father, and wept until they removed him, kindly yet firmly.

The games still continued in the outer room.

One man's death affected them not.

"27—81—5—6—13—44!"

"Keno."

"Ruined!" came in a thick voice from one of the tables.

They carried the lifeless bodies of the Mexican's victims from the place.

Daylight dawned behind the mountain peaks as peacefully as ever.

THE DRAMA—BOOK FIRST

CHAPTER IV

THE GOOD SHIP OCEANIC

"Bend your backs to the capstan, boys,
Raise the anchor high.
For the wind that fills our sails brings joy,
As to our dear ones we draw nigh."

Ringing out on the balmy air of the summer afternoon came the quaint melody of the sailors' song, as they walked around the capstan, raising from its resting place the huge anchor of the good ship "Oceanic," bound from Melbourne to San Francisco. A long trip, but a pleasant one, at this particular time of the year, free from storm and tempest, upon a staunch ship, ably managed. The deck was filled with voyagers, who with waving handkerchiefs and hats, bade a long farewell to friends and possibly dear ones.

Some found use for the handkerchief to stay the flow of tears which, somehow or other, came to the eyes of even the most hardened at the thought of separation.

A lady and her maid, (to judge from their dress and general appearance,) stood upon the quarter deck beside the captain, a genial, whole souled man, about fifty years of age. The mistress, a beautiful woman, whose age it would be hard to determine, vigorously waved a brightly colored parasol to an elderly gentleman and lady, upon the shore, while

the servant looked with little concern upon the scene.

All was bustle and confusion upon deck and pier. The stevedores, who had but recently finished their labors, leaned upon their trucks. The wharf hands had cast off the heavy cables which held the ocean monarch to the pier, and the gang planks had been taken in.

"We will soon be off, Marie," murmured the lady.

"Yes, madame."

A shout from the pier, and a hansom cab drove rapidly toward the steamer, the driver belaboring his horse with whip and reins, shouting the while to incite the poor beast to extra exertion. The occupants, there were two, signalling the vessel as if to detain it. The cab stopped and a young man, one of the occupants, leaped out, followed by the other, a negro, possibly his servant, and throwing the driver a gold piece, ran toward the steamer, the servant following, carrying a heavy satchel.

"Hold on there," cried a policeman. "You can't board the steamer now. She is too far out."

"Follow me, Jup," shouted the belated passenger, and before the astonished officer could interfere or the surrounding hangers-on realized what was going on, he made a running jump and landed full in the open port, where the men were stowing away cargo. The servant hesitated a moment, but quickly decided what to do, and throwing the satchel to his master, who caught it just as it came within reach, he too leaped out from the dock.

OFF TO SAN FRANCISCO.—Page 31.

But alas for human expectations, he was not so agile as his master, or the steamer was too far out, for he missed the port and fell with a mighty splash in the water below. The young man seized a rope, and threw one end of it to the man, and drew him safe inside the steamer.

"Mighty near drowndin', Mr. Al," he spluttered.

"Oh, a miss is as good as a mile, Jup," laughed the master.

The sailors looked at them with a wondering gaze and the two ascended the stairs to the deck.

The captain met the reckless jumper.

"You have been very foolish, young sir," he said sternly. "You ran the risk of going under the vessel, or being struck by the propellor."

The young man looked up with a quaint smile.

"I didn't, however, captain, and so don't let us worry about it. I had to make this steamer, trunk on board and so forth; couldn't let it get away. I'm all right—nigger little damp; but he won't rust. Stateroom No. 6, first cabin. Think I'd like to get them as soon as possible."

The captain smiled, while the dripping African looked so miserable that all who stood around indulged in an audible smile.

"The purser will show you to your stateroom," said the captain. "What name?"

"Albert Andrews."

"And the servant?"

"Occupies berth in my stateroom. Name, Jupiter

Solomon—great combination—a mythological god and a wise king of Israel, see?"

This way, sir." The purser spoke.

"Come, Jup; get off your wet stuff, or you'll catch cold."

"Done got it already, Mister Al," shivered "Jup." "Teeth done rattle like cassernuts."

Castanets, Jup."

"All right, sah." They disappeared from sight.

"A very handsome young man, Marie." The lady with the colored parasol on the quarter deck spoke.

"Yes, madame," answered the maid.

"He seems rather eccentric."

"Yes, madame."

"And Oh! what a funny servant. He looked too comical with his black face and the water running from his clothing, looking more like a half-drowned rat than anything else."

"Yes, madame."

"Can't you find any other answer save 'Yes, madame?'"

"Yes, madame."

"Then why don't you use it? You make me nervous. Try to vary your answers some."

"Yes— I will, madame."

"That is better. I must become acquainted with that young man. Could you not accidentally run across his servant, somehow?"

"I can try, madame."

"Do so. At last we are completely under way.

I am glad of that. I am very fond of ocean voyages. I adore them. Don't you, Marie?"

"Yes, I do, madame."

"Bing me a deck chair. I shall read for a short time."

The servant brought the chair, and the fair mistress composed herself to comfortable ease. She was fair. No doubt of that fact. The excitement had brought the faintest possible tinge of pink, (such as one will see upon the ripening peach,) to the cheek. The eyes, large and dreamy, are now resting upon the novel she is reading, and we cannot see them. Ah, now she glances out on the receding shore, and we see that they are deep and soulful. It would be hard to describe their color. The hair, cut short, curls about a finely moulded head, which the jaunty traveling cap sets off to perfection. The graceful figure is shown off to great advantage by the closely fitting paletot or cloak which covers her dress.

She is a beautiful woman, and more. There is a subtle fascination about her that few can resist. She reads for an hour, the maid holding the brilliant parasol over her head. Then impatiently she throws the book down.

"Look out, Jup, that you don't fall overboard again," cries a fresh, ringing voice.

"The stranger with the funny servant," says the maid, sotto voce, and the next moment Albert Andrews came in sight from behind the smoke stack.

He does not observe the ladies, and nearly runs into them before perceiving them.

"Pardon me," he cries, removing the soft hat.

"It is granted," answers she of the brilliant parasol. And a long look, soft, infatuating, shoots forth from the beautiful eyes. Albert perceived it.

"A chair, Jup," he cries. "I'll stay here awhile, I guess; providing, of course, the ladies do not object."

"Not at all."

So Albert Andrews cocks his feet upon the rail, and drawing a periodical from his pocket prepares to read—and flirt. Jupiter stands near the back of his chair.

CHAPTER V

A HARMLESS FLIRTATION

As he reads, or rather pretends to, for he does not pay much attention to his book, let us describe him. Eight years have passed since we left him, a helpless orphan, by the side of his murdered father. The eight years have produced a decided change in our hero. From a slender boy of thirteen he has developed into a tall, well built man of one and twenty, although he looks much older. A heavy moustache covers the smiling, sensitive mouth, and gives him the appearance of a man of thirty. Travel and experience have brought out the soft lines of the face, and the first bitter trouble of his life has caused a look of sternness to sometimes come to the tender eyes.

A very handsome man is Albert Andrews, at one and twenty. A boy no longer—made a man upon the night his father met his death.

He had seen that parent buried side by side with the friend who had been killed at the same time, and had left the spot associated with sorrowful memories, going to San Francisco. Smart, intelligent and willing, he had obtained a position with a firm doing a large business with China and Australia; and had been appointed their agent at Melbourne before he had reached his sixteenth year. Once there, he had like many others been attacked with the gold fever, and had made a fortune in the mines. His servant, Jupiter, he had met at the gold fields, and he was now upon his way home to the United States, to engage in some business, where his gold could be expended to advantage, and his busy brain could be kept engaged.

His eyes, ostensibly fixed upon the book, ever and anon glanced toward the slender figure in the easy chair. She had given up her book and was now conversing with her maid upon the points of interest still to be seen as the steamer pursued its way. Her vivacious manner attracted him greatly, and he had determined to make the acquaintance of the fair one before many hours had passed. He was puzzling his brain as to the best means of bringing this around, when Jupiter unconsciously hurried matters and brought about that which both desired. This faithful servant had been obliged to rise earlier than was his wont this particular day, and so felt

drowsy. Drowsiness is a peculiar characteristic of the African race. They seem to possess the faculty of sleeping at any time, or in any place, and Jupiter was no exception to the rule, for as he stood behind his master's chair, the eyelids closed, the head drooped and Jupiter slept standing erect. How long he would have remained in that position it would be impossible to state, but as Albert was considering how to open a conversation with the lady, the vessel gave a slight lurch, and the servant was thrown headlong under her chair. She arose screaming, while the maid gave vent to several choice adjectives in French.

Albert arose hastily, and lifting his hat, begged pardon for his servant's carelessness, mentally thanking him, while the guilty one rose to his feet with a look of startled surprise upon his countenance, laughable to behold.

"My servant is singularly unfortunate to-day," said Albert, hat in hand.

"He does not usually perform such acrobatic feats as I have witnessed to-dy, I hope." And the lady laughed.

"No—no. He is usually very quiet and a good man, but it seems as if he was bent on breaking his neck to-day," answered Albert.

"I sympathize with the poor fellow."

"He should be grateful to you."

"Perhaps he is—ask him."

"Allow me to answer for him."

"Well?"

"In behalf of my worthy servant and friend, (for such he is despite the color of his skin,) allow me to sincerely thank you for the expression of sympathy which you have recently spoken, and also to add that I only regret that I have not been placed in some position to call forth like sympathy for myself."

The fair one laughed. "If it will make you any happier, permit me to include you in the feeling. I think you deserve it, for the possession of such an unfortunate one must surely cause much anxiety. Really, I pity you."

Albert bowed low.

"And as we are told that pity is kin to a kindlier feeling, may I hope—" and he hesitated. The soulful eyes flashed up into his own. "You are an American, I take it," she said.

"Yes; why?"

"I inferred as much from the manner in which you took advantage of my expression of pity to misconstrue it."

"I merely remarked upon an old saying, 'Pity is akin to love.' It is a delightful thought to think that we are loved."

"Even if we have only met for the first time, and have been acqainted but ten minutes?"

Albert flushed. "You have probably heard of love at first sight," he said, and then drew back, startled at his own effrontery. The lady replied: "Yes, and don't believe in it. How can one possibly love another, when they have not been acquainted at all?

Admiration is mistaken for love; passion, also, is akin to it; but in order that love can exist, the soul must be subjected to careful examination, the heart must be tested, and only a constant association can do this. How can it be possible to judge by an accidental meeting as to the character of any one? We are ever at our best when in public, and the handsome costume, the carefully frizzed and perfumed hair, the numberless little things practiced by both sexes to deceive, if replaced by the actual self unadorned, as we find it at home, would shake the feeling which had begun to form in the heart, and cause the love which the first meeting produces to fly out of the window. But there. You will think me a peculiar woman, straight-laced in my ideas, while I am not. I know you are only making use of these little expressions to win favor in my eyes. All men do the same. I am used to it. But come; sit down. I want to talk to you anyhow."

Jupiter had stood with mouth wide open, during the lady's speeches. But he now hastened to bring the chair for his master, who sat down with a feeling in his mind like that of the small boy, who is showing his smartness to his companions and is suddenly called down by his father. He drew the chair near her. "Don't be afraid to come close," she cried. "I am not afraid of you, and I don't want you to feel in mortal fear of me."

"Believe me—" cried Albert, hastening to assure her.

"Never mind," she said interrupting him. "I know you are not afraid. Now I want to tell you something, and I don't want you to allow yourself to be overcome with a sense of your own importance when you hear it, for it will never amount to anything anyhow."

"Well!" cried Albert eagerly.

"I like you," said the lady demurely.

"I have liked you since I first saw you trying to break your neck by jumping in this boat, and I like you more now."

"And I—" Albert began.

"Of course you like me," said the imperturable one. "All men say the same. Now, I have come to this conculsion: We have got two months hard, tedious passage before us. We may as well become acquainted, and enjoy ourselves. I know you will be making love to me, you stated that before we had been together ten minutes, but I can stand a little of it, and when you get too far, I shall open my batteries upon you. I cannot allow too much love making. It interferes with one's appetite—Marie!"

"Yes, madame."

"Keep that parasol over my head, and don't be gaping at that ebony monster there. He won't bite you."

"Yes, madame—I mean no, madame."

"That girl makes me frantic sometimes, but she is a good girl in the main. Now, sir, your name."

"Albert Andrews, at your service; and yours.

"Mrs. Frances Norton."

A cold chill went down Albert's back. "Married?" he asked dubiously.

"I have been," and a shade of sadness filled the beautiful eyes. It passed off in a second, however, and she smiled her own bright self again. They chatted until the huge gong resounded all over the vessel, announcing dinner.

"See what you have done," she cried. "You have kept me from dressing for dinner."

"I think I can censure you for doing the same in my case," cried Albert.

"Never mind; we are mutually pardoned; but I must hurry. Au revoir. I will meet you at the table," and with a bright smile she hurried away, followed by the maid.

Albert looked after her, until she disappeared from sight. Then with a whistle he turned to Jupiter and gave him a gold sovereign.

"What's dat for?" cried the astounded servant.

"For going to sleep, standing up, and performing your gymnastic evolutions this afternoon. It is the best thing you ever did, Jupiter. I appreciated it. Come, dress me for dinner."

CHAPTER VI

AFTER DINNER

"Love some day must come to all,
Come to all, come to all."

Clearly, above the rattle of the machinery, came the manly voice, unconsciously humming the lines of the song.

" 'Scuse me, Mister Al."

"What is it, Jup?"

"You done put de napkin in your pocket at dinner —mebbe fought it was your hankershief."

"Did I, Jup?"

"Sure, Mr. Al, I perserved it."

"Perceived it, Jup."

"I guess so, sir."

"I wonder what is coming over me," thought our hero, as he found that Jupiter was right, for he drew the napkin from his pocket, and sent it to the steward. "I never did such a thing bfeore. How beautiful she looked at dinner;" and his mind drifted off to the fair one. "I wonder what material that dress was composed of. Looked like fleecy clouds, backed up by a rainbow. By the old Harry, but she's pretty. Been married—husband dead, I guess. Looked sad when she spoke of it. Confound these matches; they won't light." He had tried several, and proved that they sputtered and went out, just as he endeavored to light his cigar. At last he succeeded. "Just like a woman," he muttered, puffing the fragrant Havana, and pacing the deck.

"Scratch them the wrong way and they'll sputter and go out. Strike 'em right, and you'll be successful. Ha! Some fellow says matches are made in heaven. Great head on that fellow; but no matter where they're made, you've got to strike 'em right, where it aint too windy, if you want to get the kindling flame. By Jove, I am growing philosophical."

"Yeah's your overcoat, Mister Al," sounded Jupiter's voice behind him.

"Thanks. It is rather chilly." He donned the overcoat.

"Were you ever in love, Jup?"

"Seberal times, Mister Al."

"Funny feeling, ain't it?"

"Well, when you first gets it, Mister Al, it am kinder effluvious, but when you gits used to it, you don't seem to mind it near so much. I done got used to it." This with an air of superior wisdom.

"By Jingo, Jup, I believe I am in love."

"I done know it, Mister Al. When I seed you git up from de table, an' put dat napkin in your pocket, I done sed to myse'f: 'Mr. Al am dead gone.' I remember doin' de same thing myse'f once. I were visitin' at a gal's house in Norf Carolina, an' when I went out to git my mule to go home, atcherly I mistook de bosses horse for my mule, an' rid nearly all de way home before I diskivered de diffrunce. I jist got back in time wid de horse, fer dey was organizin' a party to hunt me

up an' hang me fer horse stealing. It am mighty dangerous to git too deep in love, sometimes."

"I should think so—Ha-ha," laughed Albert.

"Your servant is quite right," chimed in a silvery voice behind them. Mrs. Norton had approached unseen.

"I overheard your servant's graphic description of a remarkable instance of absence of mind, while under the enthralling power of love. I must confess that such love must be dangerous, as its intensity might lead to serious results. I hope that you will never be affected as seriously as that, Mr. Andrews."

Albert flushed. "I hope not. Strolling after dinner?" this to change the subject. He did not wish to have her know the incident of the napkin.

"Yes," replying to the question, "a solitary stroll. Marie is combing out some of my false hair. Shocking, isn't it, that a woman should be obliged to cover herself with gew-gaws, fripperies and false beauty, simlpy because fashion dictates. Be thankful that you are a man, Mr. Andrews.

"You are not *all* false, Mrs. Norton, I am sure there is much that is natural about you."

"Probably you mean my vivacity, or my candor; which?"

"Your heart is naturally good,"

"Now, there you are on the heart question again. If you persist in talking about hearts and love every time we meet, I shall shun you, and I do not want to do that, because I like you. I'll tell you what I

think would be a good idea. As you are bent on making tender allusion to the state of my vital organ, continually, and I cannot stand so much of it, I will reserve certain hours when we will talk of nothing else—have my office hours as it were—like a physician. How would it look to put out my shingle: 'Dr. Norton, hours for treatment of heart troubles, 12 p. m. to 1 a. m. ? Ha-ha-ha," and her laughter rang out on the balmy night air. Albert looked dubious.

"Your hours are bad ones. One would be obliged to lose much sleep to attend to them."

"Persons who are seriously affected with disorders of that nature are not supposed to sleep. They are out, usually, mooning at that hour. But to change the subject, I did not consider you acted very gentlemanly at the dinner table."

"Why? In what did I fail?"

"Oh, in many things. In the first place, you never took your eyes off me, from the moment I sat down to the table until I had left the cabin. You probably did not observe it, but you actually tried to eat the soup with your fork."

"Now, really—"

"Don't interrupt me, it is not polite. It is not gentlemanly to stare a lady out of countenance, and then not even speak to her, after they had become acquainted, too."

"I saw you talking with the captain, and I thought—"

"After my declaration this afternoon, you have no

business to think. I told you I liked you, and I meant it. So, from this time out, I shall feel neglected if you do not occupy the chair next my own, at the table. Then I can see that you do not put the napkin in your pocket," this very slyly.

"Did you witness that infernal act?" cried Albert.

"Yes; and so did everyone else. You had best be careful, young man, or you will be put in irons for that. They are very strict on ship board."

Albert ground his heel in the deck below him.

"It is not kind to remind one of these little things," he cried.

"I merely wish to make you more careful in the future—Oh! isn't that magnificent?"

"What? my mistake?"

"No-no. The moon is rising. Can't ycu see it?"

Albert turned his head. The sight was truly magnificent. Like a ball of silver, the majestic queen of the heavens rose from the water. Breathless, they watched it for many minutes.

"Oh! but it is beautiful," murmured the fair one.

"That is probably why the moon is classed in the feminine gender," remarked Albert.

"And accounts for some people saying there is a man in it, very likely. Men are usually attracted by females."

"Very likely," rejoined this young man, who was becoming more and more infatuated every moment.

They had approached the stern of the boat. He brought her a chair, and drew one closly to her,

sending Jupiter upon a fictitious errand, for some article he did not possess.

"I really think that a moonlight night is too superb for anything."

"Even has a tendency to cause one to use bad grammar," quietly remarked Albert, pleased to be enabled to return in part the discomfiture he had been obliged to endure.

"That is not polite," she cried.

"Pardon me. I felt it my duty to correct you. My hours for teaching English grammar are from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m."

She looked up into his face with an expression of mirth.

"Now we are even," she said. "But a truce to jesting. Do you not admire the effect of the moon on the water—see how its rays cause the dancing waves to reflect back the silvery light in shimmering lines of dazzling brilliancy. It is too beautiful."

"And think," remarked Albert quietly. "We are far from land, with but a few planks beneath us. Where the eyes rest upon that shining wave is but cruel, cold, engulfing waters, and if the good ship, which now bears us buoyantly upon the surface, should meet with accident, we—you and I, would be carried far beneath the shining water, to a grave fathoms deep, and the moon would shine on forever on our resting place."

A slight shudder shook the beautiful frame. "You make me shiver," she cried. "It is not pleasant to think of those things."

"I merely wished to call your mind to the reality of things—to the cruelty of your beautiful waves. Beneath the surface there is sometimes much that is deadly. Then, again, accidents are liable to occur at almost any time. The ship might spring a leak, or catch on fire. One can never tell." Then, tenderly: "It is best to look beneath the surface and see that which is hidden."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, truly."

"And suppose that the veil being torn aside only the hideous phantom of a horrible dream be disclosed."

"It is better, even then, to know."

A sigh, then the eyes seek his.

"I dread not the thought of accident, somehow. The burning, sinking ship would have no terrors for me."

"And why"

"You are with me, strong and brave. You would save me."

"Or we would die together."

A silvery laugh. "I declare we are getting decidedly romantic. I suppose the moon is to blame."

Did she really think so?

"I mean it. I would put forth any effort to save you, and if fate decreed, would die with you."

A warm, soft hand clasped his own. "We will not talk of death. It is too horrible. I would much prefer that you live for me."

"Would you?" this eagerly.

"'Scuse me, Mister Al; but dere ain't no such thing in your trunk, sah. You must hab fergot it." Jupiter had returned.

CHAPTER VII

A FEELING OF ALARM

Albert stood, silently smoking, for nearly an hour after his fair companion had left, for she had gone as Jupiter interrupted the conversation, growing so tender. He felt like kicking his ebony friend, for intruding at such a time, but thought better of it almost immediately. He kew that he was in love. "Hopelessly gone," as he expressed himself. "And she? Well, I hardly kow how to take her. One moment she is laughing, and taking a man's thoughts from him, and explaining them even before they are fully developed, and one would feel it a very delicate task to attempt to make love, for fear of being laughed at. The next, the soft voice grows low and tender, the beautiful eyes seem to read the soul, and the heart feels encouraged, and the words of love come to the tongue, and nearly make themselves heard. Confound it! I love her; and she—must know it. I'll tell her all upon the next opportunity that presents itself, and if she returns my love, all right. Rather sudden—never met her before to-day. Well, its better to decide quickly in these things."

"Capen's coming, sah." Jupiter's voice.

"Ah, I want to see him. Go bring me some

cigars, Jup. Box with green label, bottom of trunk —you know."

"Yes, sah, I knows. But leff me tole you somethin', Mister Al. I done got out o' my bed at fo' o'clock dis mornin', and I am fagged out. You kin stay on dis yere deck till mornin' if you wants to; but after I done brings you de cigars, Jupiter goes to roost."

"All right, Jup. Hurry with the cigars."

"A beautiful night, Mr. Andrews."

"Magnificent, Captain." Jupiter hurried away.

"Have a seat, Captain, I would like to have a talk with you, providing of course that you have time."

"I can spare you an hour, sir. We are in good waters; no prospect of storm," and the genial captain sat upon the deck chair, but recently occupied by Mrs. Norton. Jupiter returned with the cigars. The captain accepted one with thanks, and applied the match. "Ah! Henry Clay," he murmured. "Julian Alvarez, Havana. Am I right?"

"You are, sir,'' and Albert lit one.

"I never smoke any others if I can get this brand·

"These were sent me from San Francisco."

"Ah!"

The captain evidently liked good cigars, for he paid particular attention to the one he was puffing.

"Captain, I would like to ask you a question." Albert spoke.

I will answer it if I can."

Puff-puff—clouds of smoke.

"Do you know Mrs. Norton?"

"For some years back; but slightly."

"Did you know her husband?"

"No. Never met him."

"Is she a widow?"

The captain sat up straight in the chair. "Excuse me, Mr. Andrews, but don't you think this is a subject which we are not justified in discussing?"

Albert flushed. "Probably you are right, Captain. It is hardly gentlemanly to be prying into a lady's secrets. I met the lady to-day. She—a—interests me. I felt some little curiosity to know a part of her past life."

"Yes; so I see," replied the captain quizzically.

"You—a—will pardon me, Captain?"

"Nothing to pardon, my dear boy. I will tell you what I know. It is not much, and will not harm her. The lady you are interested in, came from San Francisco to Melbourne, with me, upon this same ship, as nearly as I can remember, about seven or eight years ago. She was not the same woman then that she is at present. Some sorrow seemed to have blighted her young life, and she was ever sad, and depressed. She would sit for hours, looking over the stern of the boat, watching the foamy waves, as the propeller lashed them into creamy froth. Seldom said but little — seemed dreamy and melancholy. I met her often after that, when I came into port, and found that she was rapidly losing the quiet, melancholy air, becoming more vivacious. In time she became the life of

Melbourne. No party was perfect without her. She led in all things. She actually seemed to grow younger. She resided with relatives, an uncle and an aunt, who had accompanied her on her trip to Melbourne, and who were dear friends of mine. I incidentally inquired as to the niece's former history one day, while smoking an after dinner cigar with the old gentleman. He at once hermetically sealed his lips and vouchsafed no information, save that she had been married, unhappily, and that he had brought her to Australia to bring back her health. 'I have been successful, as you can see,' he said.

"I asked no more questions, content to be satisfied with what I already knew. Now, young sir, that is about all I know."

A dead silence for ten minutes. "And she is returning to 'Frisco?" at last spoke Albert.

"Yes. Some business concerning the settlement of an estate, I believe. Her uncle was the stout gentleman, accompanied by an elderly lady. You might have observed them standing on the pier as you embarked."

Albert smiled. "I got on board so quickly that I had but little time to observe anything," he remarked.

"Ah; I remember. You did land in the lower port rather precipitately," and an audible smile proceeded from the captain.

"I accidentally became acquainted with the lady a few hours after we had started. She interests me."

The captain turned in his chair.

"If you will pardon me, my boy, I would offer some friendly advice. Do not become too deply interested in Frances Norton."

"And why?"

"To my positive knowledge, she has had the wealth and hearts of all the marriageable portion of Melbourne at her feet during the past five years. She has refused all offers."

"You don t think—'

"Yes, my boy; I *do* think that you are becoming infatuated with this charming lady. I have reasons for thinking so."

"What?"

"I observed you at dinner. I am an older man than you—probably better versed in the study of human nature than most men. I saw how you looked at her. I observed you put one of the table napkins in your pocket."

Albert felt himself growing red in the face.

"This is the third time I have had that unfortunate circumstance recalled. It seems as if everyone observed my absence of mind."

The captain smiled.

"There is no doubt but what every one did."

"Is that an indication of love?"

"I take it for such."

"It shall never occur again."

"Do not be too sure of that. A man in love is often liable to forget himself. In fact, he is not accountable for what he does."

"Suppose I admit I am in love, and say I propose to try and win this lady?"

"I would wish you God speed, my boy, doubting the fact, however, of your being successful."

"Then you think she would refuse me?"

"She has refused others."

"I may be different from others."

"I have heard of men engaging in business which has ruined others, claiming the same thing. I have seen them also fail."

"And some have been successful."

"My boy, they are in the minority."

"I may be like them; rather the minority with success, than the large majority with failure. Our wealthy men are in the minority."

"True. You can try."

"I propose to."

A sailor approached.

"I would like to speak to you, sir," he said, respectfully touching his hat.

"Excuse me, my boy; some business, perhaps, causes this intrusion."

Albert bowed. The captain walked away with his subordinate. They were soon conversing rapidly. He saw the captain put his hand to his head, as if worried.

"I don't like that," he heard him say. The sailor, evidently obeying some order of the commander, walked rapidly away.

Albert approached the captain, who seemed in deep thought.

"Anything serious?" he asked.

The occupied man turned, and recognizing the speaker, answered:

"I hope not. Can you keep a secret?"

"I am not a woman!"

"Ha! No. I suppose not. The man has just reported one of the sailors sick—confined to his bunk."

"Is that all?"

"It is a great deal sometimes, young man." He spoke testily. "Sickness at sea is not always accompanied with favorable results."

"Pardon me; it may not be serious."

"I hardly think so, but I don't like it. Did you ever witness a burial at sea?"

"Never."

"Then you cannot realize how sorrowful an effect it produces upon the minds of all."

"He may recover."

"I hope so. Still, it causes a feeling of alarm. Excuse me; I must leave you. I must investigate this sudden sickness."

"And if it is dangerous?"

"If it is contagious, I shall turn back to Melbourne."

"That would be unpleasant."

"I am aware of that: Sailors are superstitious; they believe that all luck deserts a ship when it once turns back from a voyage."

"Then you will hardly do so, unless it is something very serious."

HE TAKES A CHAIR NEAR HER AND WAITS FOR HER TO AWAKEN.—Page 58.

"No. Good night."

"Good night." The captain started to go.

Albert called him back.

"Oh, I forgot to ask you one thing. What is the name of Mrs. Norton's uncle? Would you mind telling me?"

"Certainly not. The name is John Barton. You probably know of him. But there! According to the superstitions of sailors, you have brought me bad luck."

"Have I? I regret it. How?"

"You have caused me to turn back."

Albert laughed.

"Nonsense! I am not superstitious. I leave that for sailors and old women."

"And they nourish it sufficiently, heaven knows. Good night again."

"Good night."

CHAPTER VIII

ANOTHER TALK

The days succeeded each other with refreshing regularity. The sickness of the sailor evidently did not amount to much, for our hero heard nothing more about it. The man was kept to himself and prcbably recovered. At any rate, Albert came to the conclusion that it was not dangerous, for the ship continued upon her voyage.

He met Mrs. Norton at the table often, but for some reason she seemed to avoid a meeting of a private nature. She appeared as affable as ever

when ever he met her; but systematically avoided him upon deck. This puzzled our hero somewhat. He could assign no reason for this seemingly unaccountable action on her part.

"I have surely done nothing to offend her," he thought. "She said frankly that she liked me; why does she avoid me?"

This question he found it impossible to answer. He frequented the parts of the vessel where she usually took her airing; but she seemed to be ever on the alert, and changed her position whenever she saw him approaching.

"I must speak to her," he said savagely, biting off the end of a Henry Clay as she vanished behind the smoke stack one afternoon, as he came suddenly upon her. But try as hard as he may, he finds this not so easily done as said. But fortune smiled upon him at last. Dinner was over, and he was enjoying his smoke and a walk upon deck, when he suddenly came upon the tantalizing object of his affections, reclining upon an easy chair, astern. He noiselessly approached her, throwing away his cigar, half expecting to see her rise and vanish as heretofore, but she does not, and he removes his hat with a low bow, and stands before her.

He now understands why he has been more fortunate to-day. Mrs. Norton is asleep. No doubt of that, for the faintest possible suspicion of a snore proceeds from her nasal organ.

He takes a chair near her and waits for her to awaken.

She does so, probably from the fact that Albert Andrews has his eyes fixed full upon the beautiful face. Awakes with a little cry.

"Pardon me," says our young man. "I was not aware that you slept. I have just come upon you. I wanted to speak to you."

A white lie; but it had its effect. The lustrous eyes fixed themselves upon his face.

"Wished to speak with me? Concerning what?"

"Can you not guess?"

"Really, I am not good at guessing. When a child, riddles were my profound abomination."

"And yet you make of yourself one of those same abominations."

"Then I am to take it that I am abominable in your eyes."

"No—No. You are simply a riddle."

"I do not understand you—how?"

"Upon our first acquaintance you were kindness personified. You even told me you liked me. Later you whispered that you would like me to live for you."

"Well?"

"And now you seem to avoid me."

"Do I?"

"Yes; you know you do. Won't you tell me why?"

"Did you ever own a dog, Mr. Andrews."

"Yes, several."

"Probably you have observed that the faithful canine at first shows his affection by licking your hand. He is content with that; but as he grows to

love you more, he begins to act in a more demonstrative manner. Not content with licking the hands, he must leap and jump about you, thereby soiling your costume and producing vexation."

"I can scarcely see in what way I resemble the dog. You are not complimentary."

"Do not become offended. I am but using a simile. You resemble the animal only in fatihfulness, and (shall I say it) love. You have been wondrous faithful in trying to bring about a meeting; faithful to your own desires, and your love you have shown so plainly that every one on ship board has noticed it."

"Really, I cannot see—"

"Hear me through. If you would be content to love me quietly, I would not avoid you; but I fear that, like the dog, you would become too demonstrative and cause much vexation."

"Then you did not mean what you said, our first night together, upon this very spot."

"What makes you think so?"

"Your actions—your very words."

"One must sometimes control one's actions."

"You are incomprehensible."

"A very big word."

"You are cruel."

"Mr. Andrews, hear me. Some one, I forget who, once said, and truthfully, in this case: 'I must be cruel to be kind, lest bad begin and worse remain behind.' Can you understand me?"

"I must confess that I do not."

She rose from the chair and walked to the stern of the boat. For many minutes she seemed gazing far out at sea. Then she returned.

"You are obtuse," she cried. "I have just been looking far over the sea. What do I behold? Nothing. Water and horizon. Search as I may, along that horizon, I can see nothing but sky and water. You do not understand me? I will speak plainer. I see you are growing to love me. I believe your love would soon be as deep as the placid sea yonder. I look far out at sea—the sea of my life. What do I see? The blank horizon of the future. Were the deep sea of your love and the blank horizon of my future brought together, they would be productive of the same effect as the meeting of the sky and water, yonder—nothing."

"But the water does not meet the sky. There is something beyond the horizon."

"True; but it is hidden from our gaze, and as far away as is the sea from the sky. So must your love be kept from me."

"Pardon me if I say I do not think your metaphor at all applicable to my case."

"You do not know."

"I do not care to."

She turned impetuously.

"It is best that we meet only in public. Let me tell you something that probably you are not aware that I know. My servant, Marie, accidentally overheard a portion of your conversation with Captain Snow, after I had left you that night. She heard

you remark something about trying to win me. Nay; hear me through. The captain told you that others had been refused; but that did not seem to deter you from carrying out your determination. You must not propose marriage to me.—It cannot be."

"And why?'

"I should refuse you if you were to ask me, and it is to prevent you from bringing sorrow to my heart, and pain to you own, that I have avoided you."

"Then you do care enough for me to shield me from suffering?"

"Alas, yes—too much. But do not force me to forget my womanhood. Allow matters to rest as they are. It is better so."

"But can I not enjoy your society without forgetting myself, and doing this which you seem to dread? I need not be banished from you entirely."

She spoke with an accent of pain:

"It is better so; I tell you," she cried. "The heart of woman is soft, the character proverbially weak. I might forget myself and yield, for you would, manlike, take advantage of every concession to press your plea. No. We had better not meet."

"But," he persisted. "Even if you should yield, I would make you a kind, loving husband I do not see any terrible after-consequences coming from such a match. From your own words, I infer that you are free to marry. I know that you have been married before, but if he, the first husband, is no

more, there is nothing to interfere that I can see. Would it be such a horrible thing to wed me?" he pleaded for his heart.

She buried her face in her hands. He saw that she was sobbing. He placed his arm about her waist. Night had fallen. None could see them. Blessed night, it covers much. She shrank from the encircling arm and rose.

"As I have told you before, you cannot see—do not know all, and never can. There is much that interferes. You would not understand if I should tell you. One thing; there is a great disparity in our ages. I am much older than you think. You are a young man, and would still be young while I would be a garrulous old woman—"

"You cannot be so much older than I. I am young, I admit, but twenty-one. You are not over six years my senior. That is nothing," and he frowned.

"Albert. I call you by your name. I am old enough to be your mother. I am thirty-six. You can see that it is impossible. But there. That is the least important. You must never dream of such a thing, for I tell you once for all, it can never be," and she glided from his side.

He called aftter her:

"Frances—Mrs. Norton—One last word."

She hesitated.

"Well?" she waited until he reached her side.

"If this is to be our last private meeting, grant me a parting favor."

"Well?"

"Kiss me."

She shuddered and drew away.

"Hear me!" he cried.

"You have but recently declared that you were old enough to be my mother. How I should love such a mother. Then, as we are about to part, grant me a mother's caress. Give me a mother's kiss. If you cannot care for me as a lover, love me as a dear son." He said this half earnestly, half bitterly.

He started back at the effect of his words. She had broken into a torrent of tears. He watched her. Suddenly she brushed aside the fallng drops with a bold, imperious gesture. She faced him.

"You can never know the effect of your words on my heart," she murmured in a low, sweet voice. "And I can never explain it to you." Then looking into his eyes, her own flashing with a look of love he had never seen there, she said softly: "Kiss me."

"He bowed his head and implanted a long, fervent kiss upon the crimson lips.

She shuddered, and from the breast came a sigh, and left him. He stood gazing after the receding form.

"She must be mine," he murmured, "come what may".

"Mr. Andrews, a word with you."

He turned and saw Captain Snow, but so changed that he scarcely knew him. The kindly eyes were uneasy and an expression of terror shone forth from them. The beard and the hair, usually so carefully

kept, were unkempt, and the face looked haggard and pale.

"For God's sake, man, what ails you?" cried Albert.

"Come with me, and you shall know." And he led the way to his cabin.

Albert followed him.

CHAPTER IX

THE PESTILENCE

The ship lamps cast a sickly yellow glare upon the surrounding objects as Captain Snow and Albert Andrews entered the captain's cabin. The worried, distressed man threw himself heavily into an arm chair and brooded silently for some time. Albert took a chair, uninvited, and waited for him to begin.

He looked up, and spoke. His voice sounding unnatural and husky.

"Mr. Andrews. What I am about to tell you may cause you to censure me—aye, even severely; but remember, I thought I was acting for the best, and now it is too late to turn back. We must face the inevitable."

"Well, sir, I am waiting," and Albert showed his eagerness in his voice.

"Do you remember our first night out, when the sailor informed me of the sickness of one of the men?"

"Yes."

"I investigated that sickness. At that time it had not fully developed, and the ship's surgeon thought best to wait a few days and see how it would turn out. We waited, keeping the sick man to himself. Upon the morning of the second day the physician pronounced the man suffering with Yellow fever!"

"Yellow Fever!"

"Yes. That dread disease whose very name is death. We said nothing about it to the rest of the men; but treated him ourselves. That night he died. We cast the loathesome body into the sea, through an open port, after midnight. We had the bunk thoroughly disinfected, the bedding burned, and really thought the disease had been satisfied with one victim, for weeks passed by without any sign of sickness among any of the other sailors.

"*Last night two of the men were stricken down, and are even now suffering the tortures of hell!* And this is not all. The balance of the crew do not know as yet what caused the death of one, nor the sickness of the others, of their companions. We have kept it secret from them. But they will surely know before long, for there is danger of the disease spreading, and if it does, we are lost, for those who are not affected will surely take possession of the boats and leave the ship unless we prevent them. Now, I came to ask your advice. I have heard you were a level headed young man, quick at expedients, and ready to act at any time. What do you think best to do?"

Albert considered deeply. The captain's words

had filled him with horror. He had heard of the terrible pestilence, yellow fever, but had never been brought in contact with it. He knew that every one on board might contract it, and the good ship "Oceanic" be converted into a floating charnel house. He felt at a loss what to say. He could form no idea of the best plan to pursue under the circumstances.

The captain spoke again:

"Come. What would you advise? For God's sake, man, if you can suggest anything, do so. I am nearly crazy myself. I cannot think. I don't know which way to turn. I have the lives of my passengers and all the souls of those on board on my hands. I must do something to save them. Suggest some plan; no matter how impracticable it may seem, it shall be tried."

"Really, captain, I cannot advise you; having no knowledge whatever of the nature of the disease, I can form no idea as to the best way of preventing its spread. I should think the surgeon—"

"He is like myself, distracted. He is doing all he can, exposing himself to danger, for he may himself be stricken and then we would be indeed badly off. No. He can recommend nothing, except to keep the sick ones isolated, and that is a hard matter to do, for the sailors are clannish, and do not like separation."

"You say that two are now stricken?"

"Yes; but it would not surprise me if five times that number were taken before morning."

Rap—tap—tap!

"Some one at the door," whispered Albert. The captain threw it open. A group of seamen stood without. They walked in, as the door opened.

"What do you want?" demanded the captain. The spokesman, a burly fellow, with a sullen face, pulled at his forelock as an excuse for a bow and said: "We has come to notify you, capen, that Jim Harris has jist croaked, an' his messmate, Conrad, de Dutchman, is nearly a goner. We think as how it looks kinder suspicious, capen, and so we comes for explanation."

The captain cast a look upon Albert that indicated louder than words that his fears were not groundless; but he showed no sign of trepidation, as he turned and addressed the men.

"I am sorry to hear that two of the boys have left us, but it is the doing of God, men, and I cannot do else than bow my head and say: 'Thy will be done.' You know, Ben, that the doctor and myself have done all we could for the boys. We have nursed them, given them medicines with our own hands, and have tried to save them. I now see that our efforts were unavailing, for you say one is dead, the other dying. All we can do is to give them a sailor's funeral, and pray for their souls."

The fellow shifted from one foot to the other. He was evidently uneasy.

"That's all right, capen. We knows you. I have sailed on this ship, the 'Oceanic,' under you for ten years. I orter know you, if eny one does. We

knows your good heart an' all that, capen, but the boys feels uneasy. One of 'em says as how Jim and Ben has the Yaller Jack, an' you knows, capen, if it are so, that every doggoned mother's son of us stand a chance of going to 'Davy Jones' afore many days. Now what we wants to know is: has the boys got Yaller Jack?"

The captain fell into a chair. He cast a beseeching look upon our hero that went to his heart. *He* realized the position in which the captain was placed, and his brain was soon at work to help him out. He saw the men waiting for an answer, and realized that the captain was in a quandary what to do. He felt that the sailors would grow more suspicious unless some reply was made to their question at once; and so, scarcely knowing what he said, he came forward and addressed them.

"Can't you see, men, that your captain is weak and nervous? He has had a great strain upon his mind, owing to the sickness of your comrades, and now their death grieves him sorely. I will say for him that I believe your fears to be groundless, and in order to show you that I really think so, I will go with you to the place where your companion lies dead, and help you prepare him for burial. Come. I am a passenger, but I will show you that *I* am not afraid."

"Good." murmured the sailors.

"That's all we wants, sir," said Ben respectfully.

"Assurance that all is right. We will show you the way, sir. Beg parding capen, fer intrudin',"

and they stepped outside. The captain seized our hero's arm.

"You must not expose yourself," he whispered. "Your action is a noble one, but I cannot accept the sacrifice."

"Captain Snow," and Albert spoke emphatically. "A short time since you asked my advice and said that whatever plan I proposed, no matter how impracticable it might seem, it would be tried. This is my plan. By quieting the suspicions of these men, they will work and help us, and by careful disinfecting and isolation, we may check the disease and they will not talk. If the report that yellow fever is on board reaches the ears of the balance of the passengers, the very fear of contracting it will render them weak and nervous, and more susceptible. So we must keep it from them. I am not afraid. I am young, healthy, never had a day's sickness in my life, and do not think old "Yaller Jack," as the boys call it, will have any effect upon me, whatever. Leave this matter to me. I will try and pull it through."

"God grant it," whispered the captain, and Albert Andrews, taking his life in his hands, hurried after the departing sailors. They led the way to the sailors' quarters, and our hero nearly staggered at the fearful stench which assailed his nostrils.

"My God!" he thought. "This cannot be stopped. The odor is fearful."

A number of men were gathered around one of the bunks.

"What did he say?" cried one, as the investigating committee entered. Albert spoke in answer.

"I come to answer. You need have no fear. I do not think there is any danger. I come myself to show you that I am not afraid."

A dark skinned, active man sprang out into the centre of the cabin. His hair coarse and unkempt, his eyes glaring.

"That's all right for you to say that," he cried. "Fer you don't know. I have seed this thing afore. I knows what it is. Jim is dead and Conrad had de black vomit a minute ago. Mebbe you smelled de odor when ye came down de step. He'll be dead afore an hour. It is yaller fever, boys. I knows it, and I can't be mistook."

Albert drew himself erect.

"And do you think you can make it any better by arousing the fears of you comrades? No. You will only make matters worse. I said I did not think the matter serious. Neither do I. Come, show me the corpse, and we will prepare it for burial. Be men. Do not allow your fears to get the best of you. Be governed by me."

The men, sullen and fearful, opened a path to the bunk, where Jim Harris lay, a horrible corpse. Our hero hesitated not one moment, but boldly advanced. His heart grew sick as he gazed upon the loathsome sight, but he had determined to see this thing through, and so ordered some water, and with his own hands washed the dead man. His boldness encouraged the men, and soon they had the remains

of their comrade sewed up in his blanket, ready to cast into the sea.

A gurgling sound from another bunk.

"Conrad has gone," muttered one of the men.

It was true. Another corpse was ready for the sea. And while they gazed, horror-stricken, with a fearful cry of anguish, one of the spectators fell upon the deck.

"What did I tell ye?" yelled he who knew it all. "I know its Yeller Jack, an' in a week we will all be food for sharks. Only one way ye can save yerselves. The boats. Trust to de sea, rader dan Yaller Jack."

The men murmured among themselves.

"He is right," Albert heard one of them mutter, and the next moment they surged toward the gangway. Quick as thought he stepped before them, and before the astonished men realized what he was doing, they saw the determined glitter in the eyes of a brave man, and looked into the barrels of a brace of revolvers, while the clear voice sounded distinctly to their ears:

"You cannot pass! I hold the lives of ten men in my hands, and as sure as God sees it, you shall die if you attempt to pass me."

A murmur of anger, and the men drew back. Not for long, however, for influenced by their fears they bore down upon the hero.

"Crack — Crack — Crack!!!" sounded the pistol shots, and then they surged up the stairs. The living barrier was removed, and three lifeless forms

showed the deadly effect of the pistol shots. Albert Andrews lay upon the deck unconscious, while the blood streamed from a wound upon the head!

CHAPTER X

THE ILL-FATED SHIP

The frenzied seamen crowded up the narrow ladder, to the main deck above.

"To the boats!" shouted the leader, the wild looking man, who had aroused the balance to their mutinous action.

"No use goin' out to sea without pervisions," growled Ben.

"On to de galley, den," commanded the self-constituted leader. "Some of us will stop by de boats. De oders go and bring grub and water."

The idea met with general favor; the party started.

"What means this?" came a stern voice amidship.

"Captain Snow," muttered one of the seamen.

He was right. It was the gallant captain. He advanced, and the light of the lantern, suspended near, showed his face set and stern.

"What means this?" he again demanded, drawing nearer.

The rough men hesitated. Finally Ben came forward.

"It means this, Capen," he said sullenly. "Both Jim and Conrad are croaked an' three more of the boys are layin' groanin' with the sickness. The

passenger, Andrews, lied to us. He said there was nothing serious. Black Tom, here, says he knows the disease. It is Yaller Jack, Capen, an' we have decided to take the boats and cut loose from the ship."

"Where is Mr. Andrews?"

"He tried to stop us; pinted two guns at us; but the boys didn't fear 'em, an' so he now lies on the berth deck, croaked, I reckon; though he sent three of the boys home afore he dropped."

The captain shrank back, horrified.

"Do you mean to say he killed three of the men, and some of you killed him?"

"Dat's it, Capen," cried Black Tom. "An' now we're goin' to leave de ship. Its sure death, Capen to stay, an' we're goin," and he started for the boat.

"Hold!" the voice rang out firm and steady. "I am captain of this vessel, and I forbid you to touch that boat!"

"We can't help it, Capen," and Ben spoke half respectfully. "Men ain't dogs, an' we can't stop here an' die."

"Remember you leave others to their fate."

"Look out fer number one, Capen; dat's my policy," cried Black Tom.

"Men, this is mutiny. I command you to return to your quarters, or if you think them fatal, take any others you choose. If you refuse—"

"Supposin' we does, Capen;" and Tom looked savagely defiant, in the flickering light.

"Then I shall summon the balance of the crew who are faithful, and also the passengers, and put you in irons."

A derisive laugh came from Black Tom.

"You'll neber do it, Capen. Wer'e goin' an' you can't stop us. Come, boys," and he seized the water-proof covering of the boat, and ripped it off. Quick as thought the brave captain raised a small whistle to his lips, and a shrill blast rang out upon the night.

The Portuguese, Tom, turned with a savage oath, and raised a heavy iron pin, which lay upon the deck, to strike the commander.

Crack! sounded a revolver, and the dark-skinned sailor fell to the deck.

"Courage, captain; I am with you."

It was Albert Andrews who spoke. He had recovered consciousness and had crawled upon deck, just in time.

The sailors uttered a deep curse, and then rushed upon the two men. The sound of many feet, a scrambling upon deck, and the balance of the crew, including engineer, fireman, stokers, and cooks, rushed upon the scene.

A few half dressed passengers also made their appearance.

"Mutiny!" called out Captain Snow, and the next moment a desperate battle for the supremacy was being waged.

The sailors fought like demons, and the yellow

light of the swinging lantern reflected the glittering knives as they did their deadly work.

Albert leaned upon the guard rail, pale, weak and exhausted.

"You are hurt," a sweet voice at his side spoke the words.

"Badly." He turned and saw Mrs. Norton, in a loose, flowing wrapper, with a wrap thrown around her shoulders, the beautiful hair unconfined, and falling in waves to her waist.

"Oh, I am so sorry. What is the trouble?"

"Come away. I will tell you." They walked to the stem of the boat. He seized her hand.

"We are face to face with horrible death," he whispered hoarsely. "The men are dying with the terrible scourge, yellow fever. Some of them have attempted to take possession of the boats, and leave the vessel. I tried to stop them. This is the result," pointing grimly to the wound upon his head.

"They will be confined, however, for they cannot stand the force opposed to them; but that will not improve our condition. In a week we may all be dead."

She looked up into his face.

"Albert," and the voice spoke tenderly. "You remember I told you once that in time of danger I knew that you, brave and strong, would save me. I repeat those words. I believe it to-night."

He pressed the hand to his lips.

"I will try!" he cried. "Or, to use my words of that night, we will die together."

She shuddered.

"It is horrible—the thought of this loathsome disease."

He forced her into a chair. He was sitting beside her.

"Do you also remember that you told me you would prefer having me live for you?" the voice was husky, but *so* eager.

"Yes—I remember."

"Then listen. I shall try to save you, and myself. And if it should be that we survive, will you remember then that I saved you for myself; that I tried to live for your sake. Will you be mine?"

The beautiful head drooped low.

"Come!" he continued. "We are threatened with a horrible death. But fate may decree that we escape. In the presence of death, there should be no secrets. I tell you I love you. Speak, answer me. Do you love me?"

"Yes;" very low.

"And if we survive, you will be mine?"

"If heaven decrees. Yes."

He clasped her in his arms.

The sound of the struggle grew less. The sailors had been overpowered.

"Come!" cried the rapturous lover. "Come! I will conduct you to your cabin. Sleep, and feel safe. I will save you!"

He left her at the state room; the frightened French maid was awaiting her coming.

"Thank heaven Madame! you have returned!" she cried.

"Good night!" cried Albert; and she vanished from his sight.

He ran briskly to the deck. He felt not the pain from his wound. He thought not of the threatening danger. She had promised to be his—his own. He would save her. He loved her.

He ran into the captain as he hurried up the ladder.

"The mutineers?" he cried.

"They are secured," answered the captain gravely. They stood together on the deck.

"I am sorry for this;" and Captain Snow spoke regretfully. "Many of those men have been with me for years. They were influenced by fear, and thought not of what they were doing. It was necessary to confine them, however, for they would have ruined us. It leaves us short handed. We need nurses for the sick."

"I will assist you."

"I do not ask it, my boy. You have done too much already."

The doctor hurried by, his hands full of bottles and packages.

"I am going to those lately stricken," he said. "I am afraid the plague will spread with greater rapidity than we anticipated."

"Do all you can, Doctor, to check it."

"I am, Captain; but one man cannot do much. I am not well myself." He hastened on his way.

The next day he was stricken down. He died in horrible agony. The disease spread with devilish rapidity. Left without a physician, the captain could not do much. With the assistance of some of the passengers, Albert being foremost, he administered the medicines and cooling draughts as well as could be done. Naught seemed to check the pestilence. One by one, the men dropped off, thrown into the sea by companions, who in turn fell victims to the disease. The mutineers were still confined. They seemed to be free from the contagion, for not one of them had yet been attacked. Many of the passengers had succumbed, and had been given the sailor's burial. All were horror-stricken. Albert stood one day, weak and despondent by the guard rail. A light step sounded behind him.

"For God's sake, Albert, come to Marie. I fear she has contracted the fever."

It was his betrothed.

With a sickening fear at his heart he followed her.

The poor girl was wildly throwing her arms about her, as she lay upon the bunk.

"Pierre Amo," she murmured as they entered.

"She speaks of her lover," murmured Frances.

Albert drew near the couch. The girl was raving now, delirious. As they watched, the features contracted as it in pain, the voice arose in shrieks; a frantic convulsion, a stiffening of the frame, and Marie was dead.

"I am alone!" shrieked the terror stricken woman, as she threw herself upon the bed.

Albert gently raised her.

"No. I am with you." He spoke very gently; she looked up into his face.

"I had forgotten you," she murmured.

He persuaded her to leave the dead girl, and conducted her to another cabin. There were plenty of vacant ones, alas. Their former occupants were sleeping their last sleep in the depths of the sea. He left her.

Returning through the saloon he met the steward. The poor fellow looked haggard. Tears shone in his eyes.

"Ah, Mr. Andrews, what will become of us, now, sir?" he cried.

"Why? Has anything more serious occurred?"

"The captain has just passed away, sir. We are without a commander.

Albert felt his heart sink. Truly they were destitute.

What would they do now? They disposed of the body of the kind captain and faithful commander, Albert reading the burial service.

All of the subordinate officers had succumbed several days before, so the steward was next in rank.

He took command, but not for long. He too died. Oh, God! How long can this last?

Albert was informed of the death of the steward as he arose one morning, Jupiter bringing the news.

He scarcely heard the words. He felt strangely.

A racking headache and a severe pain in the region of the kidneys nearly drove him wild. He strove to dress, but gave it up. He could not stand. A fearful thought flashed through his brain.

"I am stricken with the fever!" He became unconscious.

CHAPTER XI

DESERTED

When he recovered, he looked about him. A raging pain in his head nearly blinded him. His surroundings looked strangely unfamiliar. The furniture of the cabin seemed gilded, and the glaring light that flashed from its polished surface affected his eyes.

"Throw it out the port!" he shouted.

"What, Mister Al?" he faintly heard a voice utter.

"That glistening, fiery chair and table. It is burning my brain. I cannot look at it."

Then he wandered off. The beams in the ceiling seemed twisted and bent. They, too, suddenly seemed possessed of a fiery heat—heat that consumed him—heat that scorched his upturned face, and see, gliding along their brilliant, glaring surface, devils! Black, scarlet, green—all colors. Hideous little demons, malignant little creatures, each armed with a tiny tri-pronged fork, which was red hot, and they plunged them into his helpless form.

"D—n you!" he shouted. "Take out those torturing lances. They burn my vitals."

The demons leered and grinned, and danced along the ceiling. Yes; and they had tails—long, wiry tails, that twitched and moved as their possesssors danced in their incarnate, fiendish glee. Now they were upon him. They had him by the throat. They were digging at his heart.

Suddenly one of them held a bleeding object aloft.

It was his own heart, throbbing, beating, while the blood streamed from its vesicles.

"See his heart;" cried the demon. "See how it beats —for her! He loves her. His heart is for her. He will save her. She is to be his bride. Ha! ha! he cannot save himself. See! her image is imbedded in his heart!" They had torn the object asunder. He saw the smiling face of his loved one, as if in a frame, in his heart.

"Put it back in place!" cried the demons. "He loves her. Put his heart back in his bosom. We cannot destroy his love."

He felt them thrusting the heart back in his breast. Then they danced upon it and he felt it throbbing joyously to be thus restored. He closed his eyes. He heard the pattering of the devils' feet. He looked up. They were dancing upon the ceiling again, and they burst forth into a song, as he gazed:

"We cannot destroy his love. Ha—ha! He will save her. No—no. She will save him. His love

will save him. He must not perish. He shall not perish. She will save him."

Wilder and wilder grew the song. The rapid whirling of the lithe bodies, the twisting and twirling of the long, slender tails bewildered him. They had gone.

"Water! Water!"

The voice was faint and pathetic. The faithful servant placed the cooling liquid to the parched lips. Eagerly he drank.

"Where am I?" the faint voice asked.

"You is in your cabin, Mister Al. You is mighty sick, sah."

It was Jupiter.

"Are you a devil, Jupiter."

"No, sah."

"I thought you were."

He drowsed off. He heard the voice of his servant as in a dream. It conveyed but little meaning to him then. This is what it said:

"De mutineers has been let loose, Mister Al. Dey has left de ship wid de boats, and has took all de grub."

Grub—grub—grub. He did not understand it.

He fell into a deep slumber. He awoke, feeling cooler. A dense smoke filled the cabin.

"Jupiter!" he called.

No answer.

The smoke was suffocating.

What could it mean?

He looked around the small cabin. It looked

familiar. He felt weak. What had occurred? Then he remembered. He had been sick.

"Jupiter!" he called again.

No answer.

He crawled out the side of the bunk. He staggered and fell, too weak to stand.

He saw upon the table a bottle. The label read, "Hennessy's Three-Star Brandy." He seized the bottle and raised it to his lips. Ah! He felt new life coursing through his veins.

He saw that he was dressed in simply shirt and pantaloons. It did not matter. He was too warm to put on any extra clothing. He staggered to the door and threw it open.

The smoke made him recoil. Why this smoke? From whence came it?

He saw his servant hurrying toward him.

"For de Lord's sake, Mister Al, what am you doin"? he shouted.

"The smoke," gasped the feeble master.

"I hab been to find what done it," answered the servant. "And I saw, Mr. Al. We am done;

"De ship is on fire!

Great God! The ship is on fire, and no one to even try to extinguish it!

Then he thought. The mutineers! the words of Jupiter which had come to him as in a dream. They had left the vessel, first firing it.

They were lost!

"The men," he gasped. "Surely some one can try and quench the fire."

"Mr. Al," came the answer solemnly. "You and me will soon be de only livin' people on dis ship."

Could this be true! All dead—all, the victims of the deadly fever.

"My God! My love," he thought. The burning words flashed through his brain. Could she, too, be dead? He dreaded to ask the question. Finally, weakly he whispered:

"Mrs. Norton. What of her?"

"She must be dead by dis time, sah. I saw her dis mornin' at de last gasp.

"She dead! No—no. It cannot be." He staggered back upon one of the saloon sofas. Wild thoughts came to him. His brain reeled. A surging, as if many waters had swept over him, came to him. What was that? Music? Yes—some one singing. He heard the words:

"His love will save him. He will save her. No —no. We cannot destroy his love. She must not perish. She *shall* not perish. He opened his eyes. He saw the broad saloon peopled with the many-colored demons of his fever. They beckoned to him, their glittering eyes piercing to his soul.

"Come and save her," they sang. "Come and save her." They came toward him; they assisted him to his feet. Then, with cries of glee, they danced toward a cabin—*her cabin*, where perchance she lay dead—dead and cold—dead and cold.

The words ran through his brain in letters of fire, weird and fantatsic. He had reached the door. He opened it.

Yes. There she lay, dead and cold. "No—no! It cannot be! She cannot be dead!" The little devils are at her throat and breast. They are endeavoring to arouse her. He kneels beside her. He calls upon her. No answer. The cabin is filled with the smoke. His mind does not realize it. He cannot understand it. She must not lie there and die. No—no. To the deck!

He raises the lifeless form in his arms, the demons shouting with glee. They assist him. Yes. They are beneath her, supporting her body. Out into the saloon. On to the gangway. He can never ascend the ladder.

"Ha—ha! We will help you."

The little friends. Up—up the steps. A breath of fresh air. Thank God! out in the air again. The hot blasts of fire surge down upon them. "Fire—we care not for that," sang the demons. What is that? A cloud upon the horizon? Yes. A black cloud. It comes down upon the ship. It is over it.

Patter—patter, sound the falling drops upon the scorched deck. It increases. The rain falls in volumes. The heavens open. The little devils shrug their misshapen shoulders. They do not like rain.

"Ah; but we do—my love and I. We feel the cooling waters come down upon us. Ah, rain from the heavens!"

It falls in dense clouds upon the vessel. It continues for hours. It falls upon the raving man, bending over a still, white form.

It falls upon the upturned beautiful face.

Thank God for the rain, Oh, Albert Andrews. It has saved your life and your love.

CHAPTER XII

SAVED FROM THE PESTILENCE

"Jup!"

"Yes, sah."

"I am very weak."

"Yes, sah."

"I have been very sick."

"Deed you has, Mister Al."

A long pause.

"Where are the other passengers?"

"All dead, Mister Al."

A groan from the parted lips.

"All, Jup?"

"All is dead, 'cept you an' me an' —"

"Who, Jup?"

"Mrs. Norton."

"She lives!"

"'Deed she does. sah."

"Thank God!"

"You must keep quiet, Mister Al, or you'll make youse'f wuss. I has had a mighty hard time wid you, sah, and you come putty near dying, an' killing de lady, too."

"What do you mean, Jup?"

"Well, I t'ink you is too weak to excite jist now. I'll tell you some oder time."

"No. I am strong enough to hear you; tell me all, now."

The servant shook his head dubiously; but began:

"You see, Mister Al, when de steward done died dere were nobody to take charge of de ship, an' so one of de passengers he kinder looked after tings, you know. You was took de same morning. Well, Mr. Passenger he tought it were a shame to keep de poor sailors cooped up, and so, one mornin, he let 'em loose. Dey were mighty glad to git out; an' what do you serpose dey done? Loaded up Mister boats wid pervisions an' water and cut loose from de ship. I took notice dat one on 'em went below afore he got in de boat; but I didn't tink anyting 'bout dat. We couldn't stop dem from leavin', for dere were only two men, 'sides myself, on board. De ingineer an' his men had died; de ingines had stopped and de oder two men were powerful sick an' weak, so we couldn't do nothing. I stood an' watched de boats out o' sight, and den come down an' tole you.

"You didn't understand me. You was near dead youse'f. Dat night de two men died, an' I frew 'em overboard. Two big sharks eat 'em afore dey hardly struck de water. I'll bet every doggoned shark for miles round heah has got de yaller fever, dey has eat so many men what died wid it.

"After seeing de sharks eat dem fellers, I come down yeah to your cabin. You was chasin' debils all over de bed. I sat der all dat night, listenin' to you, until I nearly got de debils myse'f. I tought

HE RAISES THE LIFELESS FORM IN HIS ARMS.—Page 86.

we was de only livin' people on de ship; but as I was goin' trough de saloon I heard some one callin' for water. I went to de place where I heard de voice, and saw it were Mrs. Norton. I tell you, Mister Al, she looked mighty bad. She didn't organize me. She looked like she were on de last gasp. I give her some water an' left her to die in peace. I come back to your cabin. You was sleepin'. All of a sudden I smelled smoke. I didn't go see what made it fer a long time. At last it got so thick dat I made up my mind to go see what it were. I left you in de cabin, an' went on deck. De smoke was comin' up frough de hatchway. I went to it an' saw dat de place where de sailors slept were on fire. I rushed back to where I had left you, an' you nearly scared me white, for you had got outen your bed an' was standin' in de saloon."

"I remember that, Jupiter, what next?"

"I done tole you dat Missus Norton were dead, and you seemed to git de debils agin. You run ober to her cabin; you pulled her outen her bed, an' carried her up on deck. I don't see how you eber done it, you were so weak an' sick. Jist as you got on deck an' I followed you de sky got black, an' it commenced to rain. Lord! how it did rain. I tried to git you back in de cabin. No, Sirree; yon wouldn't stir, but stood right dere, wid de rain pourin' down on yourse'f and de lady for hours. De rain kep' up for two days. It put out de fire. I opened de hatchways so it could git down where it

were burnin'. I got you down in de cabin after a while, an' toted de lady back to her bed. You had an orful sick time after; but she seemed to git better. I have nussed you both for near a week, an' I am mighty glad you has come to youse'f agin."

"And she, Jup, where is she now?"

"Sleepin' like a baby in her cabin."

Another long pause. The weak, almost helpless man was thinking over the events; his mind grew dazed as the horrible thoughts crowded through his brain. All dead and gone—captain, passengers, sailors, all. Only himself and faithful servant and, (this thought was joy,) she whom he loved. But what was to be come of them? Drifting on the bosom of the ocean, perhaps miles off the course, where no steamer or passing vessel would see them. They lived; but for how long? He tried to rise. His limbs were powerless. They refused to obey him. He made another desperate effort.

"What is you tryin' to do, Mister Al?"

"I must get off this bed; I must go to her."

"You must do nothin' of de kind. Lay right where you is. Don't you go triyn' to git up, or you'll be sick agin."

He saw that his servant was right, and so closed his eyes to think. He did not think long, for sleep came to him—sweet, refreshing sleep, to build up the wearied, enfeebled frame; to bring vigor and new life to the tired brain. He slept for a long time, and felt stronger when he again opened his eyes. The room was darkened and seemed vacant.

"Jupiter!" he called faintly.

"He has gone to prepare some food," answered a sweet voice.

"Frances."

"Yes, Albert."

"It is you?"

"Yes. I have come to nurse you, and make you strong and well again."

"Let me take your hand," timidly, like a child asking a favor.

He felt the warm hand of his betrothed clasp his own. He raised it to his lips.

"Now, don't excite yourself," came the voice he loved to hear, warningly. "I am your physician now, and you must obey me."

"Did ever man have such a sweet physician?"

"I do not know. We have no time to study the matter. Now, lie there, and do not talk any more. Jupiter will return soon."

"Frances."

"Yes, dear."

The words went to his heart, they gave him new life.

"Kiss me."

"I am afraid it is not good for you."

"I will not remain quiet unless you do."

"I am afraid you are a bad boy."

"I am ill, you know, and you must humor the sick."

"Well; just one."

She pressed her lips to his. He lingered in the

fond embrace as long as he could. She withdrew.

"Thank you," he murmured, and lay back on the pillows. Jupiter returned with the nourishment, some broth and hard tack, scalded and buttered.

He ate heartily. It was astonishing how much he could eat. She sat by his side and watched him. She remained there, her little hands in his, until late; then she left him, first pressing a kiss upon the thin lips.

Days passed on. Albert rapidly grew strong, and was soon able to sit on deck with his loved one by his side. Jupiter, among his other accomplishments, was a good cook, and prepared delicate little repasts from the provisions with which the vessel was stocked.

And so they drifted on for weeks, each day being a repetition of the one preceding it. They rose early, ate breakfast, walked about the portion of the deck that had not been burned, each taking turns in reading to the other, or sitting silently in the stern of the boat, watching the distant horizon, in vain expectation of beholding a sail, listening to the weird negro melodies sung by Jupiter as he busied himself in the galley or about the saloon. They had been talking, one beautiful afternoon, enjoying the breeze as it came from the ocean, talking over their miraculous escape from death.

"It seems as if heaven had decreed that we should live for each other," she said, as they sat side by side.

"It *is* so," he answered. "First, we are saved

from the horrible scourge, and then the deluging rain quenches the raging fire in the sailors' quarters. Truly it is predestined that we should be spared."

She looked up into his eyes, fondly, tenderly. Then with sudden interest: "Have you examined the burnt portion of the vessel?"

"No. I care not to visit it, there are memories connected with it that are not pleasant."

"Memories? What?" she seemed puzzled.

"I was obliged to deprive three men of their lives in that cabin. I think of it sometimes and reproach myself for my hastiness."

"You did it for the good of us all."

"Perhaps; but when I consider that those men were overpowered by their fears of a horrible, loathsome disease, I cannot blame them for being carried away by their fears. They loved life, they did not want to die; and perhaps thought they were acting for the best."

"You must not let such thoughts oppress you. Any other brave man would have done the same if he had been placed in your position."

"Very likely. Why did you ask the question?"

"Oh, I do not know—a feeling of curiosity perhaps to witness the scene of so much death, and see the ravages committed by the devouring element, fire."

"If you wish to go there, I will accompany you."

She expressed herself as being curious; so he arose, and they walked toward the large open space which had been burned. They soon reached the

spot, and together looked down into the yawning hole. The fire had burned through decks and all before being extinguished by the rain, and Albert shuddered as he realized how near death they had been. "Mighty bad fire, Mister Al," sounded Jupiter's voice behind them.

"Yes, Jupiter; I have been wondering why the flames did not burn through some portions of the sides or bottom. They have destroyed the entire interior.

"Can't say, Mister Al. Guess, maybe, dat de rain put 'em out too quick."

He walked across a charred timber to the other side. Suddenly he uttered a slight cry.

"What is it, Jup?"

"Nothin' much, Mister Al; only I'm goin' down into de hold an' look around a little."

"You had better not attempt it, Jup. Some accident might befall you."

But the negro seemed to disregard his warning. He had already swung himself down into the charred and blackened interior. They stood and watched him. Reaching the bottom in safety, he walked over to the side of the vessel, and they saw him examining the timbers. He remained below nearly an hour, and finally forced his way through a mass of fallen woodwork into the bow of the boat.

They concluded to watch no longer, and returned to their former position astern. Gradually their conversation drifted off from Jupiter's incomprehensible actions, to other matters, and they forgot all

about the negro. Night came on, and as they arose to go below to the saloon, where the evening meal was usually prepared about this time, Jupiter made his appearance, blackened and dirty, with an anxious look upon his countenance.

"Have you been among the ruins all this time?" cried Albert.

"Yes, Mister Al."

"Did you forget that we ate?"

"No, Mister Al, and I'll hab somethin' ready mighty quick," and he turned to go.

"What were you doing down there?" suddenly inquired the master.

"I'll see you later, Mister Al," answered the negro, and he hastened away.

Al laughed.

"He is decidedly mysterious," he said.

"Yes; but perhaps he discovered something."

"Perhaps," and he seemed to dismiss the matter from his mind.

After dinner, (or supper,) while our hero was smoking a cigar, a large number of which were fortunately found in the captain's stateroom, he perceived Jupiter beckoning to him mysteriously from the galley. He walked toward him.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Good deal, Mister Al. Is Missus Norton out o' hearin'?" looking about suspiciously.

"Yes. She is changing her costume in her saloon."

"I'm glad o' that."

"Why? What in the devil is the matter with you?"

"Don't git impatient, Mister Al. It am a mighty serious thing."

"What is? Come, if you have anything to tell me speak out."

The negro dropped his voice to a whisper.

"Do you remember when I got down into de hold?"

"Yes—yes."

"Why do you s'pose I done it?"

"I haven't the remotest idea."

"I'll tell you. As I was walkin' cross de beam I thought I saw a glimmer of daylight through de side o' de vessel. I got right down and 'zamined it, an', Mister Al, I done found dat de *whole side o' de ship was no thicker dan paper.* De fire had burned it nearly through. I went up into de bow and dere is big holes dere in many places. Mister Al, we're all right jist so long as dere ain't a storm; but if de wind blows and de ship rocks, half of de boat will break in pieces, an' if it do, den we'll go to de bottom sure."

Jupiter spoke solemnly and earnestly, and Albert Andrews knew he spoke the truth.

They had been saved from a horrible fate twice, only to be reserved for another equally as terrible to contemplate!

CHAPTER XIII

THE STORM

Albert walked away from the galley after hearing the result of Jupiter's examination of the interior of the burned portion.

His heart, so light but a few hours before, light because his love was with him, by his side, now felt heavy as lead in his bosom. He glanced out over the sea. It was as smooth as glass. No sign of storm there. The stars studded the sky in millions, twinkling brightly, seeming like a myriad of bright angel eyes, looking down upon him. The vessel gently rocked upon the ocean's bosom, the placid waves, softly sobbing as they lapped the ship's sides. All was peace, not a sound broke the stillness.

"There is no danger," he thought; still that heavy feeling at heart. There seems to come to most people a premonition of coming evil. Try as hard as we will, that unaccountable sensation which appears to foretell to our minds the approach of disaster, can not be cast aside. Its still, small voice whispers in the ear of our inmost soul, and refuses to be quieted. The slightest event arouses it at a moment's notice, and if we go against its heedings, and bad results follow, we feel like the boy who has been warned not to skate on thin ice, and who gets a ducking for his heedlessness.

"I told you so," says the monitor, and we believe it would have been better to have heeded the warn-

ing. We think more of these things when they chance to result detrimentally. We cry them down as superstitions, when they result favorably.

This creates superstition!

This feeling of premonition was at Albert Andrews' heart. If Jupiter had not informed him of the weak condition of the vessel he would probably have never thought of danger; but now he eagerly scanned the ocean, dreading each refreshing breeze as the advance courier of heavier ones, which might lead to storms, and the destruction of their habitation.

He slept but little that night. His mind was oppressed by the feeling of fear that had filled it upon hearing Jupiter's words. He arose bright and early. The day was dawning as he ascended the ladder that led to the deck. The sun was rising like a ball of fire from the distant horizon. He walked up and down the deck for an hour, and avoided the burned portion as if some deadly reptile lurked there.

"Breakfast ready, Mister Al." It was Jupiter's voice. He went to the table, Frances joining him a few moments later. She looked as if she had passed a good night, the large eyes shining and bright, the fresh color reddening her cheek.

"You do not look well, Albert," she exclaimed, as she sat down.

"I slept badly," he explained.

She laughingly advised a little chloral, or some sleeping draught, and then they turned their attention to Jupiter's cooking.

The accustomed walk took place after breakfast. They usually spent an hour or two in walking the deck. This morning, however, they did not exercise so long. The sun, gaining power as it rose, was terribly warm, and they were glad to seek the cooler precincts of the large saloon.

"It is going to be a scorcher," commented Albert, as they left the deck.

"My! Yes. I should say so," she replied sinking into an easy chair, and vigorously fanned herself.

"They say these warm days are storm-breeders," she added.

Albert gave a great start.

"Who says so?" he cried roughly.

"Why, everyone," looking up in surprise. "I hope I did not make you angry by mentioning the fact."

"No—no! That is, I—Oh, excuse me for a few moments, will you. I am not myself this morning."

He had started for the companion-way.

"Albert!"

"Yes," stopping short.

"Come here."

He obeyed.

"You are cross, and really, I believe you are worried about something. Are you?"

"No. I told you I did not sleep well."

"I will excuse you; don't be long."

"I will not—only a little business with Jupiter."

"Kiss me."

He did so. (Who could blame him?) Then left the saloon. He found Jupiter in the galley.

"Jup."

"Well, sah."

"Are you much of a weather prophet ?"

"Well, sah, kinder little dat way. When I were a young man I were held in great dispute where I done come from."

"Repute, Jupiter."

"Right sah. Repute. Dem words sometimes git mixed."

"What do you think of the weather to-day?"

"Mighty hot, sah—a wedder-breeder, we would call it in Souf Car'lina."

"Do you think it will storm?" anxiously.

"Well, hardly," looking out over the sea. "May blow a little, but not much, I reckon."

The master walked along the narrow passage, among the pots and pans.

"You remember what you told me last night?" he said, finally.

"Yes, sah."

"I have been worried ever since. I spoke to you just now to get your opinion. If you think there is any danger of a heavy storm we had better make ready for it."

"How, sah."

"By strengthening the affected portions," and he stopped; how could they prepare for the ravages of a storm?

"No use trying dat," said Jup, doggedly. "You could'nt make it stronger nohow."

"What are we to do, then?"

"Only ting I knows on is to build a raft."

Ah, a raft. He had never thought of that. He had not thought of anything, save trying to keep the old hulk together. Yes, a raft would be the best, for, in case of the vessel sinking, they could then trust themselves in the hands of Providence upon a frail, but buoyant craft. Yes, a raft, and a good, strong one.

They set about it at once, and by noon had it completed, and a good strong one it was—made of long timbers, (a portion of the best part of the ruins,) tightly strapped and tied to a number of panels, then some planks laid across the top, a rail nailed about the edges, to prevent either of them from slipping off; a yard which could be used for a mast, tied on securely, and a small sail, and the last resource was ready. No, not quite yet. At the last moment Jupiter suggested stocking their new craft with provisions and water, which they did, in sufficient quantities to last them one month. They could carry no more.

As Albert firmly strapped on the last keg of water a light footstep sounded behind him. He turned.

It was Mrs. Norton.

"What are you doing, Albert?" she inquired.

"Doing what all sensible people should do."

"I cannot say I understand you."

"In time of safety, I am preparing for danger."

"For danger?"

"Yes. Who knows how soon we might need this raft. A sudden storm, a leak, would send this ship

to the bottom. I am guarding against the danger of going with it."

"Then there is danger?" she spoke anxiously.

"There is danger everywhere," he answered, evasively.

"I know that, but none right here, I mean."

He had risen to his feet. "No, little woman, not here, right now," he said, taking her hands. "But remember. None can tell what an hour will bring forth. I think it best to be assured."

"Ah?"

He did not tell her of the really perilous position they were placed in. No need to alarm her unnecessarily.

Jupiter had gone to prepare lunch, and they were soon recalled to the fact that they were hungry, by hearing that faithful servant's melodious voice.

The day passed on, and night threw its sable mantle over all; the restless sea, the drifting hulk with its precious freight, three human souls.

Albert had retired early; loss of rest the previous night caused him extreme weariness, and he drifted off into a peaceful slumber, profound and resting, as soon as his head touched the pillow. Outside, the heavy clouds rolled up from the west, heavy, ominous clouds. The gentle breezes of the afternoon changed into a heavier blast, and then into a tornado. The heavens opened, and rain, which had before proved their savior, now descended in volumes upon the ship. Heavy reverberating crashes of thunder sounded through the air. The

poor hulk was dashed about by the angry waves, and still the sleeper lay upon the berth with a placid smile upon his face.

"Fo' God's sake, Mister Al, wake up."

He heard the voice in his dreams. What did this voice mean, disturbing his slumbers? He wished to sleep.

"Fo' God's sake, Mr. Al—"

"What do you want?" angrily, sleepily.

"De storm hab struck de ship.!"

"My God!"

The sleeper was awake now.

Awake and out upon the floor of the cabin, standing, dazed and bewildered, looking into the face of the negro.

"The storm, you say?"

"Yes, Mister Al. Don't you heah de ship crackin'; don't you feel de rockin'?"

Yes, it was true. The vessel was being tossed about like a plaything. The danger was staring them in the face.!

"Oh, Albert, we are lost!"

A white robed figure drew near. It was Frances.

"To the deck!" he cried. "Better to face death than to be drowned like rats here."

"Oh! Will the ship sink?"

"I hope not. Trust in me. I will save you."

A tender clasp of the hand and she followed him up on deck. Jupiter was already there. He had gone upon her appearance. The sight was awful in its grandeur. The sky was inky in its blackness,

relieved now and then by the blinding flashes of the lightning. Sweeping down upon the helpless vessel came the surging billows—foam-crested, relentless, overpowering. On—on to the remains of the once good ship "Oceanic," like an army of savage furies the waves rolled mountain high upon them. Now the ship is lifted high on the crest of one of the angry waves; now plunged down into the depths.

The three terrified ones stood paralyzed with the awful sight; then, as the storm increased, Albert seized the hand of Frances and started for the mast. It was useless to try to talk, but he realized the fact that by securing themselves to the mast there was less danger of being washed overboard by some one of the overpowering waves that ever and anon swept the deck. They could not fasten themselves to the raft, for it was entirely submerged every few minutes, and they would have been drowned. So Albert made the best of his way to the mast, holding, in a vise-like grip, the delicate little hand of her whom he loved better than his own life. Jupiter had preceded them and was clinging to a rope when Albert drew near. In a short time they were lashed to the tall mast, which bent and bowed under the fury of the storm. In this position they stood for hours, spell-bound, awed and silent. Wilder and wilder grew the storm in its intensity. The wind howling in demoniac fury caused a shudder to creep through the form of the delicate woman, and Albert felt it as he stood by her side,

The vivid flashes of lightning revealed the pale faces of the two and the rolling eyes of Jupiter, who looked on in horror. Suddenly the ship gave a heavy lurch sideways, and the lightning flash showed Albert that the raft had been torn from its fastenings, and was disappearing over the side even as he gazed. He mentally groaned. Their only chance of escape had disappeared. If the vessel went down they must go with it. Even as he thought, the ill-fated "Oceanic" was tossed with sudden force down into the trough of the sea. A terrific crashing sound which rose above the fury of the storm, a violent upheaval, and the mast, to which they were lashed, turned, and they were submerged beneath the angry waters. But not for long. The ship partially righted herself and they found themselves upon the upper side of the mast again.

Another flash.

Great heavens!

The ship had parted, and they were being tossed upon the raging sea, with nothing save the mast between them and a horrible death.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ALBATROSS

The good ship, "Albatross," bound from Buenos Ayres to San Francisco, had been obliged to stop her engines in order to repair considerable damage done the propeller during a severe storm the day and night preceding. The propeller had been lifted out of the water, and the men were hard at work

putting it in proper shape, before proceeding upon their way.

The passengers (and there were a number of them) stood and discussed the terrific storm—the first they had encountered upon their trip. The captain was considerably put out at being delayed. He was several days behind time, and the delay, although unavoidable, would make him at least one week overdue. He stood upon the stern, watching the workmen. The day was calm and beautiful. None could possibly imagine that sooth, placid sea as having been so violent and savage but a few short hours before.

"I suppose we will get under weigh soon, captain." The speaker was one of the passengers.

"As soon as possible, sir."

"Hum—much damage done?"

"A crack in one of the blades, that's all."

"Glad it was no worse."

"I certainly appreciate that feeling, sir, in my own case."

"Beautiful day."

"Yes."

The passenger turned and walked away. He soon joined a group of gentlemen who, smoking and discussing some subject warmly, did not observe him.

He tapped one of them on the shoulder.

"You are engaged in earnest debate, Doctor."

The accosted one turned.

"Ah, general: Yes—a subject that has occupied my mind for many years."

"May I, without appearing curious, inquire as to the nature of it?"

Another of the party, a short, fleshy gentleman, answered:

"Allow me, general, to enlighten you, and also ask your opinion."

The one who had been called "Doctor" slightly frowned.

"I think," he said, "that I, being the first one asked, should be the one to answer."

"No offense, Doctor; none whatever. I, of course, do not think your way; and wishing the opinion of an outsider, merely proposed to the general; but you can put your side first, if you wish. I will state my views after."

"Well, I'll do so. Now, General, the subject we were discussing at the moment you joined us is one I have studied on for years, and must confess that I have found but little to lead me to believe was right, despite my ideas. It is this: Climatic effects upon persons of unsound mind. You must know that a great portion of my life has been passed among the insane and in my practice I have seen many who, although not raving maniacs, have been decidedly insane upon some subjects; others affected with melancholia, which is in itself a form of mania; the trouble emanating from a weakness of the brain. There are some discharged from asylums, who, although they seem perfectly well and sound again and are in fact pronounced cured, yet suddenly, without any apparent cause, relapse into

their former state again. Now, I have studied this matter over, and I have found that in nearly every case of this kind the patient had removed to another section of the country, and from considering the matter have come to the conclusion that the change of climate reproduced the affection, as I have found they invariably grow better when returned to their former habitation. Then, again, I have found some whom I have discharged, feeling assured in my mind that they never would recover, who have emigrated to some other land and have been made entirely well again. Now, then, I claim if those same persons were by any chance to return to their former scenes, they would be affected in the same way as before—that is, they would lose their mind again. If climatic changes affect catarrh, consumption, asthma, and other affections, why should not the same rule apply to those of unsound mind?" and the doctor looked up into the general's face.

"Now, listen to me," cried the other; "and so you can understand it, allow me to enlighten you as to the cause of this argument. You know, General, I have been located in Buenos Ayres for a number of years, and am pretty thoroughly acquainted there. My friend, the doctor, I have known for years. We were boys together, and tough ones, too, General. Well, my friend, the doctor, having a few months to spare, makes up his mind to come and visit his old friend, and finds himself warmly welcomed. We try to make everyone welcome in our South American metropolis. We are not heathen there,

although many of those of our sister continent are inclined to think so. I showed him the sights, among other things the convent of St. ——. We visit the interior, and among the sisters of the black veil my friend sees a familiar face. The more he looks, the more positive he is that he has met the sister before. He inquires of the Sister Superior, and finds the object of his curiosity to be an American lady who had come to the convent some eight years previous. He is sure, then, that he is right, and after some little difficulty succeeds in obtaining an interview with the nun. I say we had some difficulty in obtaining the desired interview, for you know they are infernally particular about holding conversations with those of the sterner sex, and my friend is a very good looking fellow. Well, he had a long talk with the lady, leaving me to stand staring at a horribly executed statue of the patron saint of the convent in the corridor. On our way home he remained very silent, and the only answers he made to my naturally curious inquiries were simple statements that he had met the lady in North America. Finally, one day, he told me more of her story. It seems she had been one of his patients years before, and had been discharged as cured, with the exception of the power to recall events that had transpired before her admission to the aslyum. 'Now,' says he, ' she has recovered the entire use of her mind. She can recall each and every event accurately; in fact, is as well as ever.' Then he pretended to say that the climate had accomplished

what his skill had failed to do, and also declared that if she were to return to the land of her birth again at any time, she would relapse into her former state again. I laughed at the idea, claiming that if the brain had been made sufficiently strong once that nature, not climate, had performed the cure, and no matter where she might go, she would still possess her complete faculties. We have argued on this subject ever since, and I actually believe my good friend to have become incensed at me for my persistence in adhering to my belief. Now, general, what is your candid opinion?"

The General looked puzzled, but finally broke out into a hearty laugh.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he cried. "I am so poorly posted on these matters that I must plead incapability to answer. I think, however," speaking quietly, "that you are both right in some respects, both wrong in others. The doctor, having made these things a study, should certainly understand them; but allow me to reserve my decision."

The doctor attempted to speak, but at that moment the man at the mast head called out:

"Something floating on the port side, sir."

"What does it seem to be?" called the captain.

"Near as I can judge, a mast or spar, and there seems to be something attached to it."

"Living being?"

"Looks like it, sir."

Sharp and quick came the command:

"Lower the boat and make for the object."

The long life-boat on deck soon splashed into the sea. The hardy crew descended the ship's side and were soon pulling toward the mast. The doctor and his friends stood by the rail with glasses leveled upon the receding boat, and the object of its destination. Eagerly they watched. The boat soon became hidden from sight by a rolling wave, yet still they watched for its reappearance.

"Some one on the mast, sir," now called the look-out.

"Man or woman?"

"Seems to be both. Yes; the boat has reached the mast. They are removing the objects lashed to it. There are two men and a woman."

Silence reigned for many minutes.

"The boat is returning, sir."

In a short time they found the look-out's words verified, for the boat was seen, riding over the billows, fast approaching the ship.

The passengers crowded to the rail as the unconscious figures of the rescued were brought on board. A negro first, with a look of despair upon his countenance; then a young man, from off whose curls the salt water dropped to the deck. Then, tenderly supported in the arms of a rough sailor, a woman, divinely beautiful, with a sweet smile upon the set lips.

As they lifted the gentle form over the rail, the doctor, who had stood foremost, watching the sailors, gasped and fell back in the arms of his friend.

"My God!" he gasped under his breath. "She here? What can this mean?"

The captain's voice aroused him.

"Do you think they can be restored, Doctor?"

"I will examine them, sir. I can tell better then."

He stooped over the form of the woman first. With heart scarcely beating in his anxiety, he felt the pulse, and listened for the evidence of life. A wild thrill ran through his frame.

"She will live," he answered quietly, and then gave orders as to the form of treatment she must undergo. They bore her away. After a careful examination, the doctor found that life was not extinct in any of the rescued party, but gave it as his opinion that it would require careful nursing to bring them through.

"They have been in the water for some time, I should think," he said; "and in another hour would have been past recovery," and he shuddered at the thought.

They provided the rescued with comfortable accommodations, and the doctor in charge of the "Albatross," assisted by the skillful passenger, did all he could to bring back to them the life which had nearly been sacrificed to the cruelty of the waters.

The propeller was repaired, the engines were started, and the good ship, "Albatross," soon proceeded upon her way.

CHAPTER XV

A MARRIAGE AT SEA

Weeks passed by.

The rescued party had been restored to health again—that is, partially so. The negro and the young man had pulled through all right; but the lady, although conscious, was still too weak to leave her bed. The two physicians had done all in their power to bring her to the perfect enjoyment of health again, but she had received a terrible shock to the nervous system, and her recovery was slow.

The young man had told his story to the captain, and it was now well known to all on board. Many were the exclamations of horror and pity that the recital called forth. There were ladies among the passengers and a woman's heart is ever tender. The young man waited upon his sick companion with faifhful devotion. He scarcely left her side, and as he often met the doctor there, they became decidedly intimate.

The woman (in whom our readers have recognized Frances Norton,) was perfectly conscious. She knew our hero and gratefully thanked both him and the physicians for their care; but she remained weak, and it seemed as if all the skill and attention that was lavished upon her went for naught. She could not leave her bed.

Albert hated to leave her side. It was only by the doctor's persuasion that he consented to do so at all.

"You will be down yourself, sir, unless you take more exercise," said the worthy man, and our hero finally took his advice. They were pacing the deck one night, together. The patient had been left in a sound slumber, and Albert had accepted the physician's invitation to take a walk and enjoy a good cigar. They had been pacing to and fro for some time, silent, each occupied with his own thoughts. Suddenly the doctor spoke.

"How long have you known this lady, your companion?"

Albert looked at him, somewhat surprised.

"I met her for the first time on board the unfortunate ship, the 'Oceanic.'"

"You must pardon me, sir; but I have never even asked the name of my patient, although I have been treating her for some time. Would you object to informing me?"

"Not at all. I thought you knew. My companion is Mrs. Frances Norton, of Melbourne."

"Are you sure?" this very sharply. "Why, yes —why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing; only I thought I had met the lady somewhere before; but that is not the name of the party I know."

"She does not seem to recognize *you*, either. I think you must be mistaken."

"The lady I had reference to would hardly know me, at any rate."

"Yet you were acquainted?"

"Only in the capacity as physician."

"Still, I should think she would know you in case of meeting."

"No. The lady was not of sound mind."

"Insane?"

"Not exactly. Had been, but was partially recovered."

"Oh!"

A silence.

"Is the name Norton, the husband's name?"

"I believe so."

"How did you learn of the lady's history?"

"I know but little. Captain Snow, of the 'Oceanic,' gave me my information."

"Ah! Then he knew the family?"

"Yes." Our hero did not inform the doctor as to what he really knew. He thought it did not concern him.

So he vouchsafed no further information.

They parted soon after.

As they shook hands the doctor said:

"I am somewhat disappointed in hearing that the patient is not she whom I know. The case of the lady was a strange one.

"There was a great mistake made, which I wished to rectify, but, of course, this would not concern your companion, and I shall be obliged to search for the other. Good night, and pleasant dreams to you."

Albert looked at the cabin door as he passed.

Frances was sleeping quietly, so he passed on to his own stateroom.

Jupiter was bustling about the cabin when he awoke.

"What are you doing, Jup?" he asked sleepily.

"Jist derangin' your twilight, sah," answered the servant.

"Arranging my toilet?"

"Yes, sah!"

"Am I not capable of arranging my own toilet?" sitting up in bed.

"Yes, sah. I knows; but Misse Frances called me, es I was passing by her do'—'Jupiter,' says she. 'Yes, ma'am,' says I. 'I wants to see Mister Al jist as soon as he gits up, an' please tell him I wants him to wear his white flannel suit;" so you see, Mister Al, as de white flannel suit is in de bottom of your satchel which you snatched as it were bobbin on de top of de water, dat night, when we come near drowndin,' I tought I had better git it out for you; an' dat am why I am deranging it for you."

"*Ar*-ranging it, Jup."

"Yes, sah. Wonder why dey have so many words wot sounds alike in de English langwidge?"

"That is a question that every foreigner asks, Jup;" jumping out of bed.

"Well, I aint zactly a furriner, Mister Al, but I gits mixed."

Albert made his toilet, donning the white flannel

suit to please the invalid. What would he not have done to please her?

Then, hastening to her stateroom, he knocked gently upon the door.

"Come in," he heard the sweet, faint voice answer, and he turned the knob and entered.

She was sitting propped up in bed. "See how strong I am getting," she said with a wan smile, as he entered. "I did this myself; arranged all the pillows and all. What do you think of it?"

"I am glad you are improving," he said, gently. "But you must be careful, so as to not overtax your strength."

"I will not do that," she murmured. "I do not think I will ever be very strong again."

"Nonsense. You will surely recover soon. You are only weak."

"No, Albert," and she sighed. "I shall never be strong again; I feel it. Do you know why I desired you to wear that costume this morning?"

"I wondered at it a little; why did you wish it?"

"I dreamed last night that we were in heaven together. I saw you, robed in white, and you looked pure and beautiful. I wished to see you look so outside my dreams."

"You must not think of foolish things," he said.

"It is not foolish to dream of heaven, Albert. It is right, for, my darling, I believe I am going there."

"Yes; some day, but not soon."

"Yes, Albert, I feel as if it would be very soon.

Do not grieve over it. It is best to look upon these things in the right light, and I really feel that way."

He bowed his head down and wept. A little white hand stole from under the coverlid, and rested gently upon his head.

"You must not weep," she said. "I shall be happier there."

He started up.

"And I. What will I be? The most wretched mortal on earth—broken hearted, miserable. No; it cannot be. You will recover."

"For your sake, Albert, I hope so. I care but little for life, for the memories of the past are not sweet ones to me. Oh, Albert, my loved one, *my* life has been a sad one, unmarked by any event save sorrow, misery, unhappiness. I have had a glimpse of heaven since I have known you. These few short weeks have been the happiest of my life; but it is decreed that the curtain of night be drawn across the sunshine of our happiness. It must end."

She lay back upon her pillows, one little hand clasped in that of her lover, the other idly fringing the coverlid.

He made no answer. Both remained silent for a long time. At last he looked up.

"Frances."

"Yes, dear."

"Do you remember what you told me the night of the mutiny?"

"What, dear?"

"Listen. I asked you if you loved me. You answered, 'Yes,' simply one little word, but oh, how it thrilled me. I said then, 'If we survive, will you be mine,' and your answer, do you remember it?"

She turned her beautiful eyes full upon his face.

"I remember," she answered, softly, and then distinctly she repeated the words, "If heaven decrees—Yes."

"Frances."

"Well."

"We have survived. Heaven has decreed that we should live. You are mine in the sight of heaven."

She buried her face in the pillow.

"No—no! she cried. "I will not survive. I must die. It cannot be."

"Frances."

Sobs—bitter tears.

"Listen, dear. You are mine in the eyes of God. You shall be mine before man. You say you must die. Then, I say, before death, the spectre bridegroom, clasps you in his arms, you shall be mine, my own. I'll wrest you from his icy arms. Do you understand? You must be mine—my wife."

She looked up.

"Albert." The voice sounded faint and low. "There is much that must be told you before I could become your wife. You must know the story of my life. I fear that you would draw back in horror, were you to know all. It cannot be."

He took both hands in his own. "Frances, death is

very nigh to you. You say you can almost feel his approach. Now hear me. I am content with the present; I care naught for the past. I love you for what you now are, not for what you have been. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.'"

"Ah, Albert, but the future, dear, the future."

"Hear me through. If by any chance you should recover, and choose to unlock the sepulchre of the past, and allow me, your husband then, to peep into its horrors, I promise you I shall never feel aught but pity for your sorrows, and great love for you as my wife. I am a man. I love you—you must be mine, even if the grave opens for the reception of your form an hour after. I can solace my aching heart with the thought that your soul, in heaven, is looking down upon me, and your angel lips are whispering, 'I love you, my husband.'"

With an effort she sat up in bed. "Do you really mean this?" in a low whisper came the words.

"As I value my soul's salvation."

"You will not reproach me, if living, or curse my memory, if dead?"

"No! Before the Creator of all things, No!"

She fell back.

"Your wish shall be gratified," she murmured. "I will be your wife when you will."

He kissed the pale face—showered a lover's kisses upon the white lips. His heart felt light in his bosom. She should be his. Then let death come and claim his bride. He felt divinely happy then. He remembered his words in after years.

As the sun was setting in the west, throwing glints of light through the half-closed blinds of the stateroom, lighting up the white couch, and shining in his dying splendor upon the pale face, they were married. An aged minister of the gospel, returning home, after years of toil among the savages of Patagonia, spoke the words that made Albert Andrews and Frances Norton man and wife. A singular event happened as he spoke the names. She fainted, and Albert spoke her name for her.

The sun set. Night fell upon land and sea; upon the "Albatross;" upon these two, strangely brought together, strangely wed.

Would their life be free from sorrow?

Time alone can tell.

CHAPTER XVI

LAND AT LAST

"Mr. Andrews."

"Ah, good morning, Doctor."

They were passing each other on deck, one week after the strange marriage. A bright, beautiful morning, the breeze from the ocean blew fresh and invigorating, and each had come up to enjoy the air.

"I would like to speak to you, Mr. Andrews."

"I am at your service, sir."

They strolled side by side the length of the promenade, without either speaking.

"Your wife seems to be improving," at last said the physician.

"Yes, sir, thank God."

"It puzzles me, Mr. Andrews, decidedly. If any one had asked my candid opinion one week ago, I should have said that she could not have lived. This morning, when I called in, she showed decided signs of rapid improvement. I cannot make it out. Can you?"

"A husband's love, doctor. The supreme power has granted my prayer."

"Hum; it may be. You are young now. Your knowledge of cause and effect is necessarily limited. You have not had the amount of experience that has fallen to my lot. Although I am a firm believer in the ways of Providence, still, I cannot conceive how a husband's love can effect a cure for severe nervous prostration, when the best medicines known to our profession have failed. A decided innovation, Mr. Andrews. A novel prescription for future use."

Albert smiled.

"I only gave that as my impression, Doctor. It may be that your skillful treatment, so long inefficient, may have at last shown its effect. You know medicines do not act alike on all persons. At any rate, doctor, she is improving; so much so, in fact, that I am going to try to get her up on deck toward night. Let us be thankful that such is the case; take the gifts the gods provide without seeking to find from what source they come."

"Oh, certainly—naturally, I, as a physician, felt curious as to the sudden change for the better—we

will allow the matter to rest. Only, if your treatment has been provocative of such good, you will scarcely need mine."

This last was said slyly.

Albert took his hand.

"You have been a true friend, Doctor," he cried. "Your skill has doubtless performed the cure. I shall insist upon your continuing the good work."

The doctor shook the young man's hand warmly. At that moment the captain approached, engaged in conversation with the general. They greeted each other and the general called Albert to one side, leaving the doctor and captain together.

General Ferdinand Lopez was a remarkable man. At that time a man of fifty, none would think him over forty. Straight as an arrow, hair and beard black as jet, eyes keen and penetrating, conducting himself with a military deportment, impressive and awe-inspiring. He held the position of general in the army of the Argentine Republic, and had been instrumental in bringing about the prosperous state of affairs that existed there at that time. He had held many influential positions in the government of the South American Republic, and was supposed by many to have considerable influence with the present powers.

A warm friendship had sprung up between Albert and this man. During the period of our hero's illness General Lopez had passed many hours at his bedside, whiling away the weary hours with anecdote and story, showing that beneath the dignified

surface of the military man dwelt the tender heart of the true friend.

As soon as they were out of hearing he spoke.

"I hear your wife is better, my boy."

"Infinitely so, sir, thank you."

"I am glad to hear it, my boy—glad to see her daily grow in health. I called you here to inform you of something that came to my knowledge a few days since. There may be nothing in it, but it will not do any harm to inform you of the fact."

"Well, sir."

"How long have you known your wife?"

Albert looked at him in surprise.

"There seems to be some mystery concerning my wife, General; that is, it seems as if some people were trying to hatch out something of the kind. You are the second person who has asked me the same question within a few weeks."

"Who was the other?"

"The doctor."

"Ah! that is why I asked you."

"What do you mean?"

"You must know that our friend, the doctor, is under the impression that he has met the estimable lady, who is now your wife, before. You must also understand that while he is perfectly reasonable upon most subjects, he is a monomaniac on one particular idea. He claims that any person who has once been insane and has recovered his faculties by removing to another climate, is at any time liable

to lose his mind again, if returned to former familiar scenes. I have overheard him engaged in argument, times without number, upon this subject, and only last night chanced to hear him in debate with his traveling companion, Mr. Atwood, and the subject of debate was your wife."

"My wife?"

"Yes. As I told you before, the doctor imagines he has met her before."

"Yes; so he informed me."

"Ah; and what did you tell him?"

"Simply all I knew. He expressed himself as puzzled, the name not being the same."

"So he said last night. To use his very words: 'If the present Mrs. Andrews had formerly been known as Mrs. Greyson, I should feel the most profound pity for my poor friend, for I would feel that he was destined to a future of misery and unhappiness; for that lady was formerly a patient of mine, and left my care still uncured, suffering with an affection of the mind that I considered incurable. Even as it is, assured by him that his wife's former name was Mrs. Frances Norton, I cannot drive the idea from my mind that she is my former patient. I do not so easily forget faces, and if she is, she will certainly relapse into her former state again, if returned to her native country.' That is my reason for making the inquiry. You do not feel offended?"

"No, General, not at you. I consider the doctor has little to do to discuss upon such a subject,

bringing a lady's name in with it, and that lady my wife."

"Then you are sure there is no relation existing between the two?"

"Who?

"Your wife and the doctor's former patient."

"I have my wife's name from herself, and the captain of the 'Oceanic.' "

"Then our friend must be mistaken. Only, let me warn you. He is a man, who once possessing an idea, adheres to it with fanatical persistency. He has this idea, and will follow it out. When we land I should advise you to keep your address a secret from the worthy doctor. He may cause you annoyance."

"Thank you, General. I shall heed your warning, and accept your advice."

General Lopez went below, leaving Albert alone. The doctor and captain had gone a long time before.

Our hero was puzzled. He could not understand the docor's strange persistence. He even grew angry as he thought of it. Then there came to him the memory of his wife's words. She had some secret mystery connected with her former life. He had refused to listen to it. He had promised to love her in spite of all. He did love her. What difference did it make, who she had been, what she had been? She was his wife, now.

"I will not trouble her with useless questions now. Some day she will tell me all, providing there is anything to tell. The doctor is mistaken.

He must be. My darling has never been insane."

He drove the thought from his mind, and went below to the bed of her whom he loved better than his life.

He looked into the eyes, beaming with love, love for him. Again he drove the hideous thought from him.

"This beautiful creature has never been a raving, mad thing. No—no. It is impossible."

She was strong enough to go to the dinner table that day, and Albert's heart swelled with conscious pride and joy as he conducted her there. After dinner a stroll on deck, a short one, for she was not strong yet, then back to her stateroom, where he read aloud to her until she slept.

He gazed long upon her face as she lay sleeping profoundly, her deep regular breathing denoting complete rest, her face as peaceful as an infant's; gazed, and then wtih a heavy sigh went to his couch.

Sighed? Why? He could not have told.

Each succeeding day showed a marked improvement in the health of the fair one. All on board noted this with pleasure, for both she and her young husband were much liked by all. She was the very life of the ship. Her naturally buoyant spirits returned with her health, and the little circle of which she was the queen, were frequently convulsed with laughter at her odd synonyms, and ready wit, as they sat, night after night, astern, and chatted until a late hour.

Even the doctor, who by this time seemed to have dismissed his thoughts as wrong, enjoyed her brilliant society. So on, until one night the captain informed them that if the wind held good the next day would bring them in sight of the Golden Gate, and the next night see them anchored in the harbor of San Francisco.

Clank—clank—clank.

"Heave, yo ho."

These were the sounds that greeted our hero's ears, upon awakening the following morning.

He rushed to the port and was surprised to find the "Albatross" making fast to the pier.

They had reached their destination much sooner than the captain had stated they would.

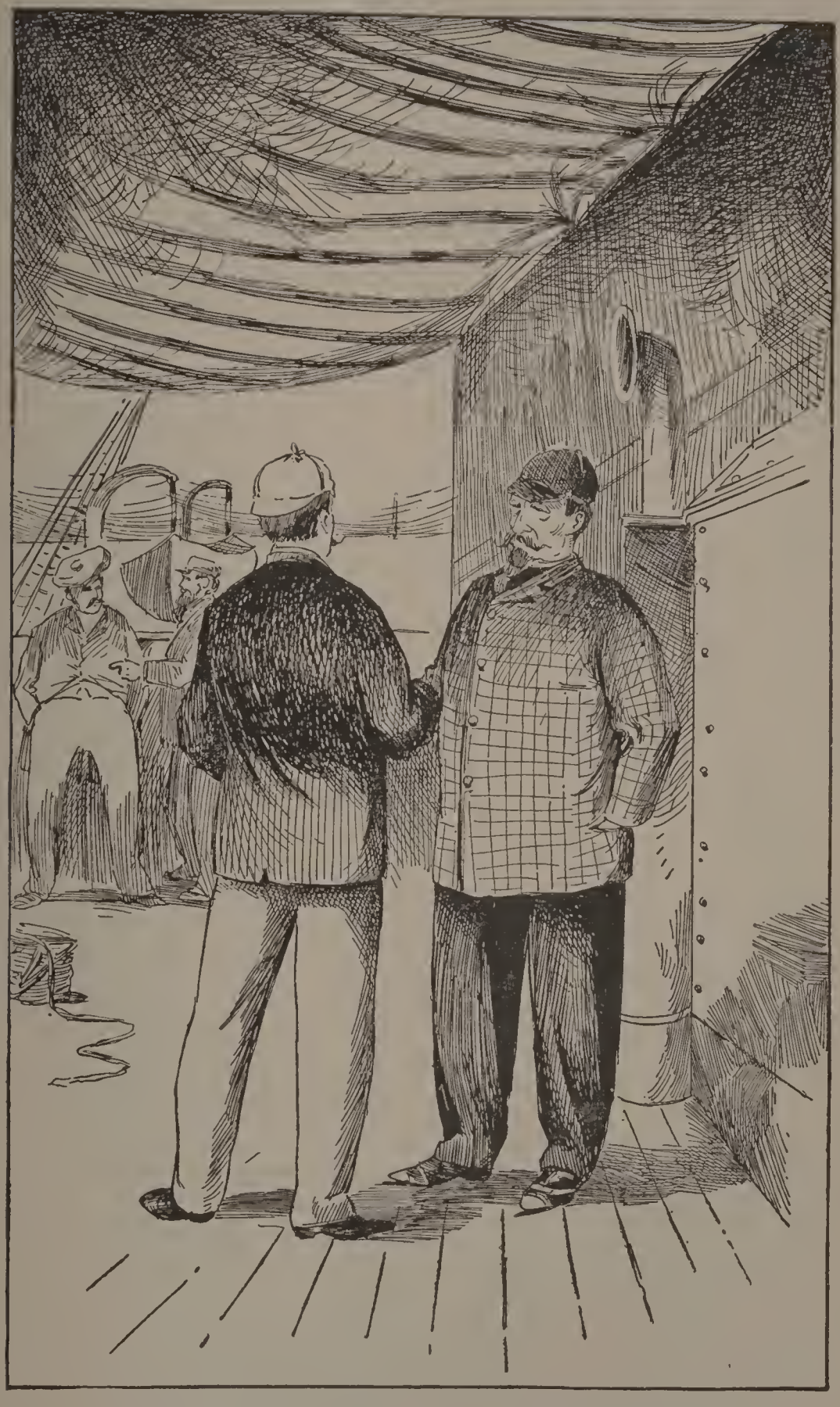
He hurriedly dressed and went on deck.

Here all was hurry and confusion. General Lopez was smoking a cigarette on the quarter-deck. Albert made his way to his side.

"Good morning, my boy," came the kindly greeting. "We have arrived at last."

Albert returned the greeting and, lighting a cigar, stood silent beside his friend, watching the busy scene before him.

"Mr. Andrews," the general spoke. "We will soon disembark. We will go our several ways, probably never to meet again on earth. Do you know, sir, I regret this parting. I have grown to look upon you as my own son. I entertain that feeling of paternal interest for you. You are young, with a beautiful woman for a wife. All looks bright



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before you. But we can never tell. Something may happen you, in the future, when you will need a true friend. I want you to promise me that if such should be the case you will remember me as one ever ready to assist you. Do not think that I imagine for a single instant that you will ever need my services. Only, remember my words."

Albert clasped the outstretched hand with warmth.

"I thank you, General. I make you my promise. If ever I need a true friend, I will remember your kind offer."

The gong sounded for breakfast. As he descended into the dining saloon he saw his wife in conversation with the doctor. She smiled and left him as Albert approached, and took his arm to the table.

A strange feeling of jealousy entered his breast for the moment, but one look into his wife's smiling face dispelled it.

He simply asked: "Consulting the doctor regarding your health?"

"Not exactly," she answered. "He was merely warning me against excitement. He says it is dangerous for one of my nervous temperament."

He was going to ask if she had ever met the doctor before, but refrained from doing so. If she wished him to know, she would tell him without asking. They took their seats at the table. This, the last meal on board, was eaten in comparative silence. They all felt the parting soon to come.

Then to make the preparations for going on shore.

Our friends had not much to prepare, all of their baggage having gone down with the "Oceanic," so they were among the first to go. Bidding a farewell to all, they made their way along the gangplank, and taking a cab were driven to one of San Francisco's palace hotels. On their way Albert noticed that his wife was silent and preoccupied. He did not speak to her. She was evidently sad at parting. Women are so peculiar that way. She was really thinking of her last conversation with the doctor. He had met her as she left her stateroom. He had bowed respectfully and said:

"I would like a moment's conversation, if you do not object, Madam."

"How could I refuse you such a trifle, Doctor?" she had said.

They had sat upon the sofa.

"I have been wondering to myself if we had ever met before."

"I hardly think so, Doctor." She had been surprised.

"Pardon me. Was the name Norton your husband's name?"

"Yes—why?"

"That is what puzzles me. Your face, your actions are familiar; your name, the one before your late marriage, strange. Try as I will, I cannot reconcile the two. You will pardon me, I know; but will you grant me a favor?"

"Yes; if I can."

"You can. It is but a promise. It is this: If, in years to come, you find that there has been some mistake made and that you have been deceived, will you communicate with me at once?"

"Deceived? How? By whom?"

"That I cannot say. I do not know. All I ask is that you give me your word that you will let me hear from you, if something strange should happen you in the future."

"Your words mystify me, Doctor, but I will grant your wish."

"Thank you. Here is my card. You will find my address printed thereon; *and one thing more, refrain from excitement.*"

She took the card and glanced at it, he watching her face narrowly as she did so. The card was a plain one, white printed with black ink. She read the name;

DR. ROBERTS,
Physician in Charge, Asylum for the Insane,
B——;

She put the pasteboard in her pocket.

"I will communicate with you, Doctor, if any unforeseen event should transpire."

Her husband had entered the dining saloon at this moment. This is what occupied her thoughts as they drove to the hotel.

BOOK II

CHAPTER XVII

AN IMPORTANT EVENT

"Hush-h;" warningly.

"Do you think she will die, Doctor?"

"She will if you don't keep your mouth shut."

"Pardon me; I am so anxious."

"I'll bet you ain't half as anxious as she is."

"Albert," from the bed.

"Yes, my darling," hurrying to her side.

"Take my hand. I do not feel so much pain when you are near me."

"Bosh!" The doctor was getting angry. "You will kill her. What does a woman know about such things? You must suffer some pain, the more the better. It will be over sooner."

The doctor was a kind hearted man, but gruff. Many of our learned men are the same. They resemble an oyster—not particularly prepossessing, externally, but good at heart.

"Oh! what agony!" the patient groaned.

"Ah, that's good!" cried the doctor, and without further ceremony he pushed the anxious husband to one side, and set about his work.

A few cries, a groan of pain, then a wailing cry, and the doctor handed something to a motherly-looking woman near the bed; then, taking the husband's arm, he conducted him outside the room.

"Is it all over, Doctor?"

"Yes—no thanks to you."

"I am very glad; she suffered terribly."

"They always do. It is natural."

"What is it?"

"Girl."

"Another girl?" despondently.

"Yes. They're good luck, too, my boy. Now be a sensible man. Don't be a fool, and go upstairs and go to bed."

"But she?"

"If you're going to take care of her, why did you call me in?"

"All right, Doctor. I'll obey you. Tell her you sent me away."

"Bosh!" and Doctor Gross re-entered the room.

The young husband and father looked at the closed door like a lost soul at the gate of Paradise, and then walked upstairs. He entered a room at the top of the flight.

"Papa," called an infantile voice as he entered.

"Now, Miss Rose, you must go to sleep;" and the nurse girl, dozing by the fire, crossed the room to the crib.

"Never mind, Sarah," spoke the father. "You can retire. I will sit and talk with her a while."

"Well, if you wish to, sir—good night," and she left the room.

"I'm glad she has gone, Papa," cried the little one, sitting up in her crib.

"Why, Rose?"

"Oh, nothing much only she sits and reads out of a funny book with a picture of an old woman riding on a broomstick on the outside."

"Does she?"

"Yes, Papa."

"Don't you like the book?"

"Oh, the book ain't much; but when she is reading she don't notice me. Anyhow, I like you better."

"And I love you, daughter."

"Well, I mean to love you, too; that's what I meant when I said like."

"Oh, little girls should say what they mean."

"I do, Papa; only I made a mistake that time, and mistake take over."

"Who taught you that?"

"Sally. When she reads the book and it don't come out right, then she says that."

"Where is this wonderful book, Rose?" He had grown curious from hearing the child talk.

"I'll get it, Papa. I know where she keeps it."

The child was out of her crib in an instant, and was soon rummaging through the drawer containing her multitudinous playthings. Soon she gave a shout of delight.

"Here it is, Papa," holding aloft a gaudily covered book. He took it from her hand, and then lifted her upon his knee. A glance at the cover showed the book to be "Madame Tissal's Old Witches' Dream Revelator, and Reliable Fortune Teller," and with a smile at the credulity of the

ignorant, he turned the pages. Mechanically he glanced at each one, until at last, with a heavy feeling at heart, he read:

"*To a female child, born upon Friday, in the month of March, sorrow and disgrace. Fortune can never come to such a one.*"

The day was Friday. The month was March. The new-born child was a female. Singular that his eyes should read this prophecy in a dingy, fortune-telling fraud, at this particular time.

"Ha-ha! What nonsense!" he threw the book from him.

"What's nonsense, Papa?"

"Sally's book, Rose. Do not ever allow her to read its trash to you. It is degrading."

"She never will, Papa. I've asked her, and she says I am too young. I'm nearly four, Papa; and Mamma says I am very smart for my age."

"So you are, little one—too smart to learn such nonsense as you will find in Madame Tissal's Dream Revelator and Reliable Fortune Teller."

He kissed her tenderly.

"Where is Mamma?" the bright eyes looking up at the gas.

"Mamma is not well, Rose."

"Why, what is the matter with her? She was well when I came to bed?"

"It is nothing very bad, little one. Mamma has a little sister for you, and it keeps her away."

"A little sister?" and the eyes opened in astonishment. "Where did she come from?"

"God sent her, Rose."

"I know God sent me, too; so Mamma says, but how did he send her?"

"The doctor brought her."

"Does Doctor Gross know God, Papa?"

"All Christians know God, Rose."

"Oh, do they?"

Silence for a time.

"When can I see my sister, Papa?" started the little one.

"In the morning, if you are a good girl."

"Oh, I'll be ever so good."

Tap-tap on the door.

Dr. Gross pushed his grey head in.

"You can come down, now," he said gruffly.

The father arose and put the child in her crib.

"I don't want you to leave me, Papa," she murmured.

"I must go now, Rose. In the morning you shall see your sister."

"Oh, Dr. Gross," called the child. "Papa says you brought me a sister from God. Where did you see God, to get her?"

"Bless the child, what a question," growled the doctor.

"You did not answer me, Doctor," she persisted.

"I'll answer you in the morning," and he made his escape. He could not answer the child's question. Who can?

The father tucked the little form tightly in her crib, and then followed the physician down stairs.

The light was burning dimly, as he entered the room.

"Is that Albert?" called the faint voice from the bed.

"Yes, Frances. It is I." He hurried to her side.

"See, my husband, another little angel to love," and she turned down the coverlid to show the infant, nestling close to its mother's side.

"Kiss her, Albert."

He did so, and then imprinted a fond caress upon the mother's cheek.

"You love your babies, don't you, Albert?"

"More than I can tell," he whispered. Then to his mind came the prophecy of the dream book, and he shuddered.

"Are you cold, Albert?"

"No, Frances."

"You shivered."

"Did I?"

"Yes; didn't you know it?"

He made an evasive answer. The doctor drew near.

"I guess that's about enough love, you'd better go to bed, Andrews, and let your wife sleep. She's all right now and I'm going home. Nurse!"

"Yes, Doctor."

"If there is any change for the worse, send for me, will you?"

"Yes, Doctor."

"Well, then, good night. Now don't sit up there

by that woman's bed all night, Andrews. Go to bed; do you hear?"

"Yes, Doctor."

"Come, let me out."

Albert escorted the eccentric but good hearted physician to the door and letting him out into the early morning air, relocked the door, and returned to his wife. She was dozing into slumber as he entered. She looked calm and beautiful.

Suddenly the lips parted; the voice came softly, but distinctly:

"My boy, my first born; where are you now?"

He drew back. His heart seemed to stop beating for the instant. He had learned part of his wife's secret.

She had a living son.

She had told him in her dreams.

CHAPTER XVIII

EXPLANATORY

Albert Andrews and his wife had gone directly east from San Francisco, just as soon as they had furnished themselves with what they needed in the way of clothing, etc.

His check was honored at any bank in the city. He was well known. After some considerable traveling from place to place, looking at desirable lands at undesirable prices, and undesirable lands at desirable prices, Albert finally settled in a small town

in the thriving State of Pennsylvania, and invested his money in the coal and iron trade.

He was very successful, and in a few years nearly doubled his capital. In this little town their first child, little Rose, was born and the husband's heart swelled with pride as he imprinted the first kiss upon the infant's lips. He named her Rose, as she was born in June, the month of roses, and the fragrant flowers clustered about the window of the chamber where she first saw the light. The child grew rapidly, could walk and talk when she was but a little over one year old, and the first word she lisped was "Papa," sweet name, from a child's lips.

He raised her in his arms and she was papa's girl from that time out.

Time passed on with rapid footsteps. One day the happy wife and mother came to her young husband and with blushing cheeks whispered that she was to become a mother for the second time.

His joy knew no bounds. It was his dearest wish to have a son, one to take his place when he was no more. He told the wife of his desire, and in their almost childish eagerness and certainty, they called the still unborn child "he." They forgot the old and homely saying relative to counting chickens.

"Don't be too sure about that boy," said old Dr. Gross; but they knew best, and laughed at the eccentric doctor. The day came at last. We have recorded the event. The child was a girl, and although Albert felt disappointed, his heart went out

to the little one, and he shared the love in his heart between the mother and the two children. He was happy, and cared not, if only his loved one endured the pain so terrible, and recovered her health.

He considered the words that escaped her lips, as he slowly made his way upstairs.

"She has a son," he muttered, "by her first husband. Perchance that son is living. She cries for him in her sleep. I will find him and bring them together. How can I start about it?"

He ascended the stairs slowly, and coming to his room, turned the knob and entered. The fire burned low, so he raked it up, until it burst into a quick blaze; then, turning up the gas, he threw himself into an easy chair to think.

To think how to find the son of his wife's first marriage, and reunite them, forming one happy family. No feeling of jealousy toward the dead entered his mind. He was too noble minded for that. No. He had heard his wife calling for her son while she slept, and he desired only her happiness. So he sat thinking for an hour.

"I hardly know which way to begin," he thought; "being ignorant of her former life, it is difficult to understand how to start. I will not ask her; no, it shall be a surprise. I must operate in a different manner. But how?" The brows knitted. "Ah, I have it. Strange I did not think of that before. Her uncle, John Barton, must know something about it. Now that I think of it, why have we

never heard from him? Frances has certainly written him. But no. I have never seen a letter directed to Melbourne. She could not have written. Singular that this has never occurred to me before. Well; John Barton can give me information. I will write John Barton this very night, and I will speak to Frances in the morning. Singular that she has neglected her relatives for so long!"

He mused for a few moments.

Ting-ting-ting chimed the marble clock upon the mantel.

"No, I'll not write to-night, or rather, this morning. I'll—go—to—bed and do it the first thing in the morning. Yes; that will be best. My brain will be clearer. Yah—how sleepy I am," and yawning prodigiously, he disrobed and jumped into bed, and as he turned over upon his side he murmured sleepily:

"Yes. I'll write John Barton the first thing in the mor—" and he slept with the word unfinished."

CHAPTER XIX

THE LETTER TO JOHN BARTON

"Mister Al."

Breaking into his profound slumbers came the familiar voice of Jupiter, sounding as if afar off, like a dream.

"Mister Al, it's past nine o'clock."

He aroused.

"Well, Jup; what is it?"

"It's past nine o'clock, sah. I thought mebbe you would want to be called. Misse was askin' 'bout you."

"Ah, yes." Out of bed in a second.

"Have you seen your mistress this morning?"

"Sure. If I hadn't I wouldn't a known dat she wanted you."

"Then you know what happened last night?"

A broad grin overspread the servant's face.

"Deed I does, sah. 'Low me to 'gratulate you. I seed de little gal."

"Who does she resemble, Jup?" washing his face vigorously.

"Well, Mister Al; I can't dezactly say. Babies doesn' look much like anybody when dey're so young. Look all alike to me, sah; like little monkeys, sah."

"Do you think so?"

"Seems so to me, sah."

The young husband had by this time finished his toilet, so he laughed at Jupiter's fancy, and left the room, leaving the servant to arrange the apartment.

He looked in at the nursery door as he passed. Rose was not there, so he hastened down stairs. He found his wife propped up with pillows, with a happy smile upon her face, as she watched the nurse wash the new arrival.

"How do you feel this morning?" asked Albert, as he kissed her lips.

"Rather weak, dear; but well."

He sat beside the bed.

" Is not our little one sweet?" she inquired, never taking her eyes off the infant.

He turned and looked at the child.

"Yes," he answered somewhat absently. "All babies are sweet."

"Do you know, Albert, I think I am the happiest woman alive?"

"Do you, dear?"

"Yes. With a kind and loving husband and two sweet children, why should I not be happy?"

"Have you ever written your uncle about our marriage and the birth of Rose?" he asked suddenly.

She averted her eyes.

"No, Albert, I have neglected to do so. I should have written him long ago."

"You have truly been neglectful. Why have you not done so?"

"Oh, I have been so happy—so much engaged with other things, I have not had time."

He noticed she spoke evasively.

Why had she not written her uncle? Surely he would have been pleased to hear from her, being her nearest relative.

"Another mystery," he thought. "I will write John Barton myself, and see if he cannot explain certain matters to me. If she has not written during all these years, she must have had some reason; what could it have been?"

"You are frowning, Albert; you are not angry with me?"

He kissed her hastily.

"No, dear; not angry—only thinking."

"Of what?"

"Many things. You will know some day."

"Here's the little dear all ready for its mamma," spoke the nurse at this moment, approaching the bedside with the infant.

"I'll go see about some breakfast," said Albert, rising and making room for the woman.

"You are sure you are not angry with me, Albert?" and the wife spoke anxiously.

"No—no; not angry with you. Why should I be?"

"I thought, perhaps because I didn't write or something."

"That is your own affair, little woman. I did consider it strange, but as you are ever wise, I have come to the conclusion that you had some good reason for not doing so."

"I had a reason, Albert. Some day you will understand." She spoke earnestly. Her tone mystified him. He thought over it while eating his solitary breakfast, reviewing it in this light. Four years and some months had passed since they landed in San Francisco. The account of the wreck of the "Oceanic" must have surely been published in all newspapers, the world over, and the relatives of his wife must certainly have felt anxiety; yet she had allowed them to suffer for all these years, perhaps mourning her as dead. She had not even informed them of her second marriage, nor the birth of her child.

"Why has she acted in this way?" This thought tortured his mind. Then his mind went back through the years past. He recalled every little thing in connection with their meeting and after acquaintance; how she avoided him, after encouraging him; how she had promised to be his wife, "If heaven decreed;" the doctor's words; the general's story. All came vividly to him.

"I should have allowed her to tell me her story," he muttered. "This mystery deepens. I would feel like a cur to go to her and demand an explanation of all now. Yet I must know. I'll write John Barton. He can tell me all."

"Papa. Papa."

He aroused himself with a start.

"I have been speaking to you for a long time, and you never noticed me; what are you thinking about, Papa?" and little Rose clambered up on her father's knee. He kissed her.

"I must have been thinking of something very serious, not to have heard my little girl," he answered.

"Tell me, Papa."

"Little girls must not become too curious."

"Papa, do you know what Jup says?"

"A great many things besides his prayers, little one."

"I know that, but this one thing; when I ask him too many questions, he says: 'I s'pose it is natcheral for women to be curious, an' you is a little woman,

Miss Rose.' I think that is why I am so curious, Papa."

Her childish imitation of Jupiter was so perfect that Albert broke out into a hearty laugh.

"I think Jupiter is right, Rose," he said, finally.

"Well."

"Well what?"

"I am waiting to hear what you were thinking about, Papa."

"Perhaps it was something to make my little girl happy."

"Oh, yes; a new dress, cr a pony;" and she jumped off his knee and danced around the table. "Was that it, Papa?"

"Perhaps; wait, and you will see." He had finished his breakfast, and rising from the table took her hand and led the way to the garden. It was the bleak month of March, but the day was like April, balmy and warm. They had a long walk, and were returning to the house, when Albert spied the nurse girl, Sarah, sitting upon a rustic bench, engrossed in Madame Tissal's wonderful work.

This accounted for Miss Rose's solitary appearance in the breakfast room.

He silently approached the girl. She was so interested that she did not hear his step upon the walk.

"Do you believe what you read in that book, Sarah?" he inquired quietly.

The girl gave a slight scream and tried to hide the book.

"I did not hear you, sir," she apologized.

"My approach or my question?" he asked.

"Your approach, sir."

"Well, then, answer my question. Do you believe what you read in that book?"

She reddened.

"It has mostly always come true, sir."

"Has it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I suppose if Madame Tissal was to declare through the medium of her book that you were to meet your death by hanging, you would go through life with that expectation?"

"I hardly know, sir. Everything seems to come out just as the book says, sir."

He frowned slightly. "How old are you, Sarah?"

"Past sixteen, sir."

"Old enough to have better sense. Now, take my advice. Throw that book away, or the first thing you know you will be crazy upon this subject. Remember; throw the book away."

He walked on. Sarah looked after him, and then put the book in her pocket.

He felt vexed that Sarah should place such faith in the trashy volume. Vexed because she had said it had prophesied truthfully.

He remembered what he had read the previous night.

Rose was walking along very quietly. He had forgotten she was with him. As he drew near the house, he observed her.

"Run back to Sarah, Rose," he said.

"Papa must do some writing, and you would be in the way."

The child obeyed him, and he went directly to his room. Paper, pens and ink were before him, upon the desk. He sat down and wrote the letter to John Barton:

D——, Pa., March 14th, 18—.

John Barton, Melbourne, Australia. Dear Sir: Doubtless you will be surprised at receiving a communication from me, an entire stranger, and will evidently feel greater astonishment when you peruse the following lines, and learn why I write you. But to come to the object of my epistle, allow me to state that nearly five years since I took passage on the steamer "Oceanic," bound for San Francisco, and while on board formed the acquaintance of your niece, Mrs. Frances Norton. I was attracted by her beauty and vivacity, and finally, after some little difficulty, obtained her consent to a marriage. You have probably heard of the pestilence which destroyed every living being on board the infected ship; also of the wreck of the same. It has been published in all the papers, and from my dictation as one of the survivors; for be it understood, but three of us lived to tell the tale; your niece, my servant and myself.

We were rescued by the steamer "Albatross," and upon the same ship your niece and myself were united in matrimony.

Previous to our marriage your niece informed me that there was a story in connection with her former life that she wished to tell me, before we were wed, as she was at that time at death's door. I refused to listen to it and married her in ignorance of her former life. We have been fortunate in having two little ones born to us, both girls. One of them is now nearly four, the other was born last night. I

have never asked my wife for any information concerning the secret of her life, thinking that some day she would make me her confidant. She has not, however, alluded to it in any way, until last night, as I stood by her bedside, she being asleep, she uttered the words as if dreaming: 'My boy—my first born. Where are you now?' The idea flashed through my mind at that moment that this had something to do with her secret; that she had a son living somewhere in the wide world, and her mother's heart yearned for him. I determined that instant to find that son, if possible, and restore him to his mother's heart; but I did not know how to begin. Suddenly I thought of you. Captain Snow, of the "Oceanic," had told me of the relationship you bore her, and so the idea occurred to me that you might render me some assistance by giving me a few facts in the case. So I write you. If you will kindly reveal to me the cause of the separation of son and mother, and the boy's whereabouts when last heard from, I will have something to work upon, and may yet enjoy the pleasure of seeing mother and son reunited, and him a happy member of my family. Hoping to receive an early reply, I remain

Yours resp'y,

ALBERT ANDREWS.

P. S.—I spoke to my wife this A. M., and found, to my surprise, that she has not written you at all since our marriage. She claims to have some good reason for not doing so, and as I trust her implicitly, I take it for granted she has. Probably you may have some idea why she has neglected you. Remember: I am not trying to pry into my wife's secrets. I am simply working for her happiness.

A. A.

He sealed the letter, stamped it with a foreign stamp, and then, descending the stairs, was soon on his way to the post-office, where he mailed it.

CHAPTER XX

A VACANT STARE

"Excuse me, I did not observe you, sir."

"It does not matter,"and the man hurried by.

Albert was the first speaker. He had just mailed the letter to John Barton, and was leaving the office, when a stranger, entering, jostled him. Through natural politeness Albert apologized. The stranger approached the window.

"Mail for Isaac Warden," he demanded.

"None for that name, sir," answered the postmaster.

With a gesture of disappointment, the stranger turned to leave. Our hero stood upon the walk outside, absently looking up the street. A child was playing with a large dog in the road. He was watching the little one.

The stranger passed him, and then turned and looked him in the face. He returned.

"Pardon me, sir; but your face has a familiar appearance. I consider we are already acquainted, for if I mistake not we had a slight encounter but a few moments ago. Allow me to take advantage of that novel introduction to inquire if I have ever met you before."

Albert took his eyes from the playing child and looked at the man who accosted him.

He saw an elderly gentleman, probably over three score, for his hair and beard were whitened by the

frosts of time. A stern face, not particularly prepossessing, but now warmed by an expression of interest; a face entirely unfamiliar. He had never seen it before.

"No, I think not," he replied to the stranger's interrogation. "At least, I do not remember ever having met you before."

"It is strange," muttered the elderly man. "Will you kindly give me your name?"

"Certainly, if you wish it—Albert Andrews."

The other seemed to consider a moment.

"I must be mistaken, " he answered. "The name is unfamiliar. Pardon me," and he hastened away.

Albert looked after him with a puzzled expression upon his face. The dog had gone up the street and the child followed it; so he started on his way home. The day was delightful, the air was just cool enough to be pleasant, and in fact Albert found, upon reaching the top of a hill, which he was obliged to climb, in order to reach his house, that the exertion had brought a few beads of perspiration to his brow. He stopped at the top of the hill to wipe his forehead, and gazed about him.

The sight was beautiful. On either side stretched out the range of mountains that intersect the State of Pennsylvania, the Alleghanies, their towering peaks showing boldly against the evening sky. The trees, devoid of foliage, standing like countless spectres upon the side. Far away at his feet ran the waters of the beautiful Juniata, "The Blue Juniata," one of the most picturesque streams in the

State. He stood and watched the landscape, and a great feeling of peace filled his heart as he gazed.

A heavy footstep behind him caused him to turn. The foreman of one of his mines was approaching him.

"Well, Joe," he asked, as he saw the man wished to speak to him

"I heard you was at the post-office, sir, and so I followed you," and the man removed his hat.

"You wished to see me, Joe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well."

"A stranger called at the mine this mornin', sir. He was askin' questions about the ownership. I think he wanted to buy."

"Well, what of it, Joe?"

"Only this, sir: If you sell the mine, would I remain with it, or would you want to use me somewhere else, sir?"

"Would you rather remain in my employ, Joe?"

"That I would, sir, and so I thought I had best speak to you, sir."

Albert smiled.

"I have not seen this would-be purchaser yet, Joe, and do not think I would sell. At any rate, if I do, I will use you elsewhere.

"Thank you, sir."

"Is that all, Joe?"

The fellow shifted uneasily.

"Well, not exactly, Mr. Andrews. I am glad you could retain me in your employ; but there is

something else, sir, that I hardly like to tell you—in fact, I don't know as it is right for me to do it."

"Concerning the mine, Joe?"

"Yes, sir."

A quick glance into the man's shifting eyes, then a stern voice:

"I am your employer, Joe. I have always endeavored to act rightly toward you. I can see by your eyes that there is something wrong. It is your duty to tell me."

The man flushed.

"I knows it, sir," he muttered. "But if I tells you, then all the boys will be down on me. I know you are a good man, sir, and it ain't right that you should be kept in the dark, but I don't like to act crooked with the boys."

"Who puts bread and butter into the mouths of yourself and little ones, Joe?"

"You do, sir."

"Then your first duty is to me. I shall not consider you my friend if you keep anything from me that I should know.

"I'll tell you, sir, but don't let the boys know it. You remember about two weeks ago two men applied for work. You hired 'em, although I told you we did not need any more. Before these fellows come everything was as nice as pie; the men were satisfied, and contented with their pay. Since the new men have been among them things are not so pleasant. They have put some idea into the minds of the men that they are not getting enough pay,

They tell them that the pit men in Ohio get a dollar more a car for their coal, and the work is not so hard. The men are dissatisfied and have made up their minds to strike, and if you don't agree to raise them a dollar they will take possession of the mine, and it will cause you trouble, sir. Now, I have told you. I hopes you will be able to fix it."

"When do they propose to strike, Joe?" This very quietly.

"After pay-day."

"Thank you, Joe. I think I can arrange matters."

"What will you do, sir?"

"Nothing that will affect you, Joe. You have proven your faithfulness. I shall not forget. If anything happens in the meantime let me know."

"I will, sir."

The man touched his hat and walked away. Albert continued homeward, a grim smile of determination upon his face.

A man not to be trifled with was Albert Andrews.

He had concluded what was the best thing to be done under the circumstances. He felt no fear. He went directly to his study, or office, whichever it might be termed, upon reaching home. He wrote several letters, and then went to his room to change his clothing.

Jupiter was there, dozing in an easy chair.

"Jupiter."

"Yes, sah," arousing himself.

"On my desk in the office, you will find several letters. Mail them, and then return at once."

"Yes, sah," going toward the door.

"Oh, Jupiter."

"Yes, sah", halting with his hand on the knob.

"Has Doctor Gross been here to-day?"

"Yes, sah. He only left an hour ago."

"Did you hear him say anything in reference to your mistress' condition?"

"Not much, sah. As I let him out de do,' he said somefin' about being worried, or somefin' like it."

"Who worried?"

"I don't know, sah. He were talkin' to himself."

"All right. Go now, and mail the letters."

Jupiter bowed and left the room. The master made his toilet and descended to his wife's chamber.

It was darkened, the shutters being drawn to.

He could not discern objects at first.

"Albert," called his wife from the bed.

"Yes, Frances; I can scarcely see, it is so dark here after coming in from the light."

"The doctor thought it best to close the blinds, so I could sleep. You can open them now, dear, I cannot compose myself."

"Not if you wish them closed, Frances. The doctor probably knows best."

"No. Open them. I wish to see your face distinctly."

He pushed open the shutters. "Come, sit beside me," she said. "Baby is sleeping and the nurse has gone out for a while."

He drew a chair to her bedside.

"I have been thinking, Albert, since you left me this morning."

"Yes. Of what?"

"Many things; principally of the four years of happiness we have passed. We have been happy, Albert."

"Very happy, Frances."

"I have been wondering to myself if we shall always be so happy. I have not been able to sleep at all to-day, from thinking."

"You must not think too much, dear, it is bad for you in your weak condition."

"Is it, Albert?"

"Without doubt. You know people become insane from thinking too much."

To his surprise she burst into a torrent of tears, sobbing wildly, almost hysterically. He strove to pacify her, wondering in his heart what there had been in his words to thus startle her.

"Frances! Frances! My darling," he cried. "You must not act like this."

She became calmer.

"What caused your grief?" he anxiously inquired.

"I don't know, Albert; I could not help it. It seemed as if my heart was too full, and would have burst if I had not given vent to my feelings. I feel so melancholy to-day."

He grew alarmed.

"Has anything occurred to cause that feeling?" he asked.

She remained silent, merely sobbing gently. Suddenly she took his hand.

"You are not angry with me, Albert."

He looked at her in surprise.

"Angry? Why no. Why should I be?" She had asked the same question in the morning. She sighed deeply.

"I don't know," she answered.

"Take me in your arms, Albert. Press me to your heart. Say you do love me as much as ever," this very eagerly.

He clasped her to his bosom, and tenderly pressed a kiss upon her brow.

"You are weak and filled with foolish fancies, Frances. There. I love you more than ever. Are you satisfied now?"

She made no answer; she had ceased to sob. He gently laid her back upon the pillows. She made no sign that she was conscious of what he was doing. He looked into her face, and a thrill of horror ran through him.

She was staring at the wall opposite—a blank, vacant stare, in which there was no reason.

"Frances, my darling!" he cried.

Still that emotionless expression.

"Are you ill?" He was growing alarmed.

The white lips opened. The sweet voice whispered. He bowed his head and caught the words:

"Forgive me, Albert; I loved you so."

CHAPTER XXI

THE STRIKE

The frightful truth flashed upon his mind upon hearing his wife's words.

She knew not what she was saying. Pain and suffering had robbed her of her reason.

He rang the bell. The nurse entered hastily. Hurriedly he explained that his wife was sick, had taken a dangerous turn, and dispatched her for a servant to go for Dr. Gross. He returned to the bed. She was idly trifling with the fringe upon the white coverlid, no whiter than her own face. She was a child again, was talking aimlessly about green fields and flowers, and was calling upon some childhood companion.

"Wait for me, Willie," she cried. "I will come as soon as I gather this bright daisy."

Then on, rambling in her uncertain way, among the scenes of her girlish life.

With head bowed in grief, he sat.

"Will the doctor never come," he repeated to himself, a hundred times over. At last a hurried footstep in the hall, and the eccentric, but whole-souled doctor burst into the room.

"What's the matter?" he demanded, as he threw his hat and cane to one side.

The young husband merely waved his hand toward the bed.

Down beside the afflicted one sat the doctor,

watch in hand. He noted the pulse, a stolid look upon his face.

"Hum," he grunted. "Burning up with fever. What have you been doing to her?" turning upon Albert.

"Nothing, Doctor. I called in upon my return from town, and found her strangely melancholy; she burst into hysterical tears, without apparent reason, and went off into the state in which you see her. I cannot explain it, Doctor."

The physician remained silent.

"Is the change dangerous, Doctor?"

"For a woman in her condition all changes are dangerous. Something has excited her. Something has caused her worriment. Can you remember having said or done anything to produce such a condition?"

The young man related the fact of the letter.

"Do you think that would cause it?" he concluded.

"Not knowing her reasons for not writing, I cannot say. Something has caused it, that is certain. What, I can't say."

"But she will recover, Doctor?"

"I am not supernatural. We must hope for the best."

He drew his pocketbook from his vest and wrote a prescription.

"Have this filled at once," he growled. "Take it to Islop's. Don't patronize that young puppy, Brown; he is too egotistical. Guess that new soda

water fountain has turned his brain. Will call in the morning."

So saying, he buttoned up his coat, pulled on his gloves and left the room. The banging of the front door a moment later announced that he had also left the house. A servant was dispatched for the medicine, and when it arrived Albert administered it with his own hands. All the long night he sat by the side of the wife he loved better than his life, refusing to retire, although the nurse protested that he would make himself seriously ill if he did not procure his proper rest. He would not hear the good woman's words.

"No," he said emphatically. "I will remain by her side until the doctor comes again."

At an early hour the patient fell into a quiet sleep, and was in that condition when the doctor came.

"Ha," he grunted, when he saw her sleeping. "She's all right; only a little delirium caused by fever. She'll wake up in her proper senses."

"Are you sure, Doctor?"

"Sure? of course I am. Don't suppose I said that in a joke, did you?"

"No. Only I thought perhaps you overrated the action of your medicine."

"I don't do those things, young man. Did she get her medicine promptly?" to the nurse.

"Mr. Andrews administered it, Doctor," the woman replied.

The doctor turned the force of his spectacles upon the husband.

"AS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, I AM WILLING TO GRANT YOU ARE RIGHT."—Page 166.

"Do you mean to say you have been up all night?" he grunted.

"Yes, Doctor. I felt anxious," replied Albert, apologetically.

"You're a fool," said that gentleman bluntly. "Go to bed—no back talk, or I won't carry on this case. If you can't trust me sufficiently, without sticking by your wife's bedside and losing your rest, I'll give it up."

"But, Doctor—"

"Don't 'but Doctor' me; go to bed and sleep. I give you my word, your wife will come out all right."

Without another word the young husband left the room. He attempted to kiss the lips of his wife before doing so, but Doctor Gross forbade it.

"You'll wake her up," he growled, "and probably spoil all. Keep an account of the number of slobbers you miss, and make it up when she recovers."

So Albert left the apartment.

"Only way to talk to these loving husbands," remarked the doctor to the nurse. "I know how to handle 'em."

The nurse agreed with him, and they fell to discussing other cases, where they had officiated jointly.

The husband went to his sleeping apartment, feeling heavy at heart, only partially assured by the doctor's words.

His mind was filled with diverse thoughts as he

tossed upon his bed; thoughts that nearly drove him frantic. Finally, he fell into a deep sleep, solely from sheer exhaustion, and slept until the chiming of the marble clock upon the mantel announced the day nearly spent. It was five o'clock.

He rang the bell for Jupiter, and that worthy made his appearance with a smiling face.

"My wife," demanded the master. "Is she better?"

"Right as a trivet, sah," answered the man.

"Thank God!"

"She's eatin' some briled chicken, sah, and she's smilin' all over her face and talkin' to de new baby."

"I must go to her."

"No, sah. De doctor says you was not to go to her room, until he came agin."

"The doctor be hanged. What right has he to forbid a husband from going to the bedside of his sick wife, I'd like to know."

"Don't know nuffin 'bout dat, sah. All I knows is dat de doctor said to me as he was leavin': 'Jup; your misis is mighty sick.' 'Yes, sah,' says I.' 'She must be kept quiet,' says he. 'Yes, sah,' says I.' 'Mister Al must not 'sturb her,' says he. 'No, sah,' says I. 'See dat he don't go into de room until I comes back,' says he. 'No, sah,' says I.' 'Ef he kicks, tie him,' says he. 'Yes, sah,' says I; an' so, Mister Al, as much as I should hate to do sich a ting, ef you desists on going into dat room I shall be 'bliged to tie you wid a rope."

"Do you mean to say the doctor ordered you to tie me?" cried Albert, aghast.

"Dat's what he say, sah. He give me a dollah, sah, to keep me in 'membrance of my promise."

"Jupiter, you could not tie me."

"I'd try, sah."

The solemn earnestness of the man's face was too much for Albert; so he sat down in the easy chair and roared with laughter. He understood the doctor's way, and knew that Jupiter would surely follow his orders. So, after a hearty laugh, he said:

"All right, Jup; I'll obey the doctor's orders."

"Will you, Mister Al?"

"Why yes. I know he would not desire my absence from my wife's room if it were not for the best."

Jupiter heaved a sigh of relief and produced from under his coat a coil of rope.

"I wont need dis, den, Mister Al; an' I'm glad of it. I knows you'll keep your word, so I'll leave de rope yeah."

The sight of the rope heavy enough to have tied an ox aroused the husband's laughter again, and he roared again with merriment, Jupiter joining him at last. He soon finished dressing, and went down stairs into the dining room. He ate a hearty meal, and remembering his promise to Jupiter, whom he could perceive watching him from the hall, went out into the garden, for a stroll and a smoke.

He walked out of the garden, out upon the hill. Night was falling. All nature seemed at rest. He

felt strangely calm. He even forgot for the time that he had sat the live-long night before beside the bed of a wife, wondering if she would ever greet him again, with the light of reason in her tender eyes.

"Mr. Andrews."

A hoarse, excited voice behind him. He turned. It was Joe, the foreman.

"What is it, Joe?"

The man was laboring under great excitement. His hat was pushed back upon his head. He was breathless as if from violent exercise. "It has come, sir," he gasped. "The boys has come out of the mine, and say they will not allow any one else to go down the shaft, unless you agree to raise the price. They have all been drinking, and are dangerous."

A grim smile compressed Albert's lips.

"Ha! They say that, do they?"

"Yes, sir."

"I think it would have been better for them to have spoken to me in the right way first. Now they have thrown themselves out of work, for I will not grant their desire, nor allow them to work again."

"What will you do, sir?" anxiously.

"Shut up the mine, before I will allow myself to be dictated to by those in my employ. Come, Joe."

"Where are you going, sir?"

"To the mine. I will speak to these fools. There may be some among them not entirely devoid of common sense." He had started in the direction of the mine.

"It is dangerous, sir, to-night," cried the foreman, reaching his side.

"I have faced danger often, Joe—wild beasts, savages, human wild beasts. I do not fear these men. They have eaten my bread; they will not harm me."

And he strode rapidly in the direction of the coal mine, one of many that he controlled. And the steely glitter in his eyes and the compressed lips, showed that he was not to be trifled with.

CHAPTER XXII

LABOR AND CAPITAL

Not much was said by either master or man until they reached the mine. Around the engine house, whose noisy machinery was now quiet, stood the men, in groups; some with the small lamps used by them, while at their work far down into the bowels of the earth, alight; some holding flaring torches of hard pine, whose yellowish glare reflected upon their blackened faces, blackened in their efforts to wrest King Coal from his fastnesses in the earth's centre, gave them the appearance of demons.

There were fully two hundred of these men, and each group, gathered around the leader, were listening to what he said about their determination. This strike was a foolish thing on the part of these men. Most strikes are. Albert Andrews was a kind, but strict, employer. He really paid better wages than any other mine owner for miles around, and the men knew this, but they had allowed them-

selves to listen to strangers, and had become dissatisfied. Instead of asking for an increase they had struck, in the manner described.

Our hero, followed by the foreman, advanced toward the centre of the noisiest group. They were being harangued by one of the fellows who had caused the dissatisfaction. They did not observe him until he was in their midst. Then the speaker suddenly became quiet, and Albert took his stand upon a small coal car, and looked down upon them.

"What is the trouble now," he demanded in his clear, ringing tone.

Not one answered for some time. At last one, a burly miner, noted for his quarrelsome disposition, stepped forward, and spoke, and by the light of a flaring torch, Albert could see he had been drinking.

"The trouble is this, Mr. Andrews. We have come to the conclusion that all men are equal. Our forefathers shed their blood in the Revolution to prove that, and we don't see any reason why we should forget it, even if it was a long time ago."

"Good! good!" roared the miners. Albert waited until they had become quieted, and then said calmly:

"As an American citizen, I am willing to grant you are right; all men are equal in freedom."

"Well, then, why don't you pay us the same as they pay in Ohio."

"For the reason that the work is different. There they have not the improved machinery that I have expended large sums for, to make your labor lighter.

Here you can get out nearly double the amount of coal that they can there, and really get better paid than they do."

"I'd like to see it," roared the burly fellow. "They git a dollar more than we do. Is that paying us better?"

"Listen. Suppose they get out one car a day, and get two dollars and a half for doing it, and you get out two cars a day and receive one dollar and a half a car. Which amounts to the most?"

"Why, two cars, of course; but we have twice as much work to do to git out two cars."

"No. They could get out just as much as you do, if they had the same hoisting machinery; but they have not. They are obliged to bring their coal to the surface by the means of the old-fashioned machinery, and it takes them twice as long. If you only received one dollar and a half a car and could get out but one car per day, the same as they do in Ohio, then you would have some justifiable cause for complaint. As it is, you have none, for you make more than they do."

"We don't see it that way," growled the man. "A car's a car—no matter how you put it, and if them fellows in Ohio are worth a dollar more than we git, then we're worth it, too."

"If you thought that, why did you not come to me as men, and tell me what you wanted; ask me for an increase, instead of stopping my machinery, thereby causing me delay and expense, and stopping work?"

"That's what we were going to do after we had struck," replied the man.

"We didn't think you would give it," cried another.

"We struck to be sure of it," cried a third.

"Have I ever refused you anything within reason?"

"Don't know as you have."

"Are not your homes pleasant and comfortable?"

"Yes, but we pays rent for 'em."

"Wouldn't you be obliged to pay rent to some one else if not to me?"

"I s'pose so."

"Can you rent of anyone else cheaper?"

"Never tried."

"You have always received your pay promptly, have you not?"

"Yes; what we got."

"You get as much as you earn."

"I don't think so," yelled one of the dissatisfied.

"Then why have you not applied to some one else for work, where you could have received more?"

"Our families are here, and we can't break up our homes."

"Do you not think that your present action has more of a tendency to break up your homes than anything else could have done?"

"Don't know. We must look out for ourselves. We know if we strike you will have to give in, and pay us what we ask. The miners in Ohio did it, and they got it."

"Oh, they did? and how long were they idle before they were successful? For months in the meantime, their families, wives, and little children suffered for the actual necessities of life. Many of them actually starved to death. What did they gain by the strike? Nothing. The owners could well afford to allow them to remain idle, for *they* were not suffering for food, and could supply all demands for coal from the supply they already had on hand. The miners lay idle for a long time. Finally, when the owners required their services again, they put them to work, and increased their pay. They could then afford it, for the price of the product had increased; and then the foolish men cried aloud that they had been successful, not considering the want and privation they had been obliged to undergo; not considering the long time they would be obliged to work in order that they could make up what they had lost. Just look at it. They were earning one dollar and a half a day, before the strike, and they received one dollar more after they went to work again; but they lost many months' work, and were really no better off until a year had passed. They had suffered in the meantime, debts had been contracted, doctors had to be paid, money had been foolishly expended in meetings, and many men became drunkards through trying to drown their sorrows in the cursed glass. No, boys. The men in Ohio were no better off, even after they gained the day—not so well off in fact, for they had lost all sympathy from their employers, who would not hesitate to throw

them out of employment entirely, upon the slightest provocation."

The crowd remained silent for some time. Albert's words had evidently improved some of them. At last the ring-leader spoke up again.

"All this chaff amounts to nothin'. You are the boss; you has the capital. We are the men; we has the labor. It's right that we should have at least an equal share of the profits, for we give our life for our work. You live in a big house; you has servants to wait on you, wine to drink, nice beds to lay in. We work hard, has water to drink, bread to eat. We can't git much more. Our houses are little; our wives and children wear calico. It ain't right. We only ask our share."

Albert bit his lips.

"Has it ever occurred to you that my capital, invested in that which gives you that bread you speak of, was contributed by myself alone? You gave no part of it. I assume all risk, you receive your pay, whether I win or lose. If I had not provided a place for you to work, you would have no work to do. Capital and labor should work together, hand in hand; but is it fair and just that capital should give labor an equal share in all profits, and also assume all risks? I do not think so."

"Well, what are you going to do?" cried the leader. "We have made up our minds; we won't work no more at the present pay; we won't go down into the pit, unless we git as much as they pay in

Ohio, and what is more, we'll take good care no one else takes our places."

"Then I am to understand you will try and force me to pay you more?"

"Not exactly that; only we won't work 'til we gits it."

"It means the same thing. You have come to the conclusion that this is the proper way to try and better your condition."

"Certainly."

"You think it better to strike than to come like men and ask for what you want?"

"Ain't that the same as askin?'"

"No; there is a decided difference. You want my answer. You shall have it. *I will never increase your pay one cent,* and more: from this moment you can consider yourselves discharged from my employ. If you had come to me and asked me for an increase, I might have considered your claim; but when you try to force me you have shown but little knowledge of my character. I will never accede to your demands. I can live without this mine; without your services. I have capital. You will find it hard to exist upon with you possess, simply labor, for although it is worth something, it can never be put upon an equality with the power of gold."

A sullen roar sounded through the crowd. They had not expected this.

"You won't give us what we ask?"

"No."

"You can't work the mine without us."

"Then the mine will be closed. But do not reckon without your host. The mine will be worked. There are plenty of men who will be glad to take what you willfully cast aside."

"Yes; and I'll help to find them," cried one familiar voice behind the car.

The next moment a man clambered up into the car beside our hero. It was the elderly stranger he had met at the post-office.

"I heard what you said," he whispered. "You are right. Don't give in to these fellows. I can easily obtain all the men you need."

This was said in a low tone before Albert had recovered from his astonishment at his sudden appearance. The crowd had begun to break out into hard and threatening talk.

"We won't let 'em work," shouted the burly miner. "We won't allow any one to go down that shaft."

"We will see about that," replied Albert, in a quiet tone; and with a quick motion he drew from his hip pocket a beautifully mounted revolver. He held it up in the flaming light. "Do you see that, men," he cried. "Well, be it understood, once for all, that I own this mine, not you, and *I* propose to run it to suit myself. *I* shall be the first to prove to you that you *shall not* control the actions of any one. I am going down that shaft, and if there are any among you willing to return to your work at the old figure, follow me. I am going to start the engine of the shaft, and you attempt to stop me at your peril."

He descended from the car, followed by the stranger. As he struck the ground the burly fellow aimed a blow at his head with an iron coupling-pin that would have ended his life if it had struck him. In an instant all was confusion. A number of the strikers decided to return to work; they turned upon the others and forced them back. Albert, with encouraging cries, made his way through the midst of the struggling, fighting men, and soon stood in the engine house. The foreman, who had stuck closely to his side, understood the working of the engine and soon the regular throb of the mighty machinery sounded out upon the night air. This enraged the dissatisfied ones still more; their anger being raised to a boiling pitch by seeing some of their comrades desert them. They grew reckless, even demoniac, and began throwing huge lumps of coal in at the open door and windows of the engine house.

"Close the door!" shouted Albert. The men inside started to carry out his orders; but before they could do so a piece of coal struck the stranger upon the head, and he fell, without a groan, upon the floor. The sight of this aroused our hero to the greatest pitch of anger. Calling upon the men to follow him, he sprang out into the midst of the fight. Revolver in hand, he led the fray, not firing a shot, for he did not wish to rob any of them of life; but using its breech with deadly effect.

The battle was long and terrible; many were the heads split open, and the bodies bruised and man-

gled; but when the sun rose upon the scene of the fray, the disturbers of the peace had been driven from the field, and those who were satisfied with their lot went down into the mine, and upon the first car rode Albert Andrews. He had kept his word.

The old gentleman was carried to Albert's residence. Doctor Gross looked doubtful when he viewed the wound.

"Very bad," he growled. "Keep him in the house some time; but by careful nursing, guess he'll pull through."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE STRANGER'S STORY

Albert had gone directly to his wife's room upon returning from the mine. He had remained there until a force of men had arrived, armed and prepared to shield the mines from harm. The ones who had caused the trouble had been put under arrest, and there seemed to be no further cause for alarm.

On his way home our hero called in at the cottages of some of those who had struck. He told the wives of their husbands' actions; but assured them that they should not want, promising them that he would see that they received food and raiment until their foolish husbands found something else to do.

"I am willing to help you," he said. "But I can no longer keep them in my employ."

He found his wife much improved, and went to his much needed rest, feeling satisfied in mind.

The weeks rolled by. The ring leaders of the trouble had been tried and found guilty of attempt to incite riot, and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Albert offered to pay a fine, if the judge would accept it, to keep the men out of prison; but his honor refused.

"It will teach them a lesson," he said. "The stay in prison will not hurt them." And so to prison they went.

Albert was entering the house, upon his return from the trial, when he heard his name called. Looking up, he saw it was his guest, who had called him from the window of his room.

The old gentleman had passed through a dangerous sickness. The skull had been fractured, and Dr. Gross had been fearful at one time of death taking place; but the old man possessed a powerful constitution, and gradually grew stronger. He was now almost entirely recovered; but kept his room yet, through the doctor's orders.

"Andrews," he called through the window.

"Ah, good morning," answered our hero.

"Come up; I want to speak with you."

"Very well; in a few moments."

He entered the house. Frances, who had recovered almost entirely by this time, was walking along the hall, holding little Rose by the hand, while the nurse, carrying the late arrival, was following her.

"Here comes Papa," and the little one, leaving

her mother, ran to her father's side. He raised her in his arms and kissed her.

"I hope you feel stronger to-day, Frances," he said, drawing near his wife.

"I am improving daily," she answered. "I will soon be strong enough to go out."

He kissed her.

"I am glad to hear that," he murmured. "I have felt very anxious during your sickness. I have missed you sorely."

"What have you done with the poor men?" she inquired.

"The judge sentenced them to a term of imprisonment. I tried to beg off for some of them, but his honor thought it best to teach them a lesson."

"I am *so* sorry. I know it was wrong for them to cause so much trouble, but they were influenced by others. What will become of their wives and children?"

"I have provided for them; they shall not want."

"That is so much like you, dear. Your heart is so tender. I must visit them when I am strong enough."

"Do so. They would appreciate it."

He left her standing in the hall, and went to the wounded man.

"Got home at last, eh?" was the greeting he received. "I have been fuming and fretting for a week to see you. In fact, ever since I have been able to be out of bed. I told that old fogy, Gross,

that I had business with you; but he positively forbade my seeing any one."

"Dr. Gross is peculiar; his ideas are strange, but they usually prove correct."

"That's all right; but when a man is sheltered under another man's roof for nearly two months, it is proper that he should be allowed to at least thank him. Here I have been all this time, and I dare say you do not even know my name."

Albert smiled.

"You are mistaken, sir. True, I have not had the pleasure of conversing with you; but I learned your name from the fact that the landlord of the hotel where you were stopping brought your mail as soon as he learned of your whereabouts, and from him I learned your name."

"Ah! So there is some mail for me?"

"Quite considerable, sir. Dr. Gross advised me to keep it from you, however, until you were better. He claims that excitement of any kind is not good for you."

"Then I am to infer from that that I will not be allowed to read my own letters until he grants permission?"

"Those are his orders, sir."

"He assumes a great deal of authority," fumed the invalid.

"He is your physician, Mr. Warden; and as he has brought you through, I should advise you to abide by his orders."

"Well, I suppose I must," growled the other; "but he told me this morning that I could not talk, and so I called to you as you passed my window. I suppose you are in a state of wonderment regarding my presence here."

"Not here; no. I had you brought here. I *was* surprised at your sudden appearance at the mine the night of the strike."

"I'll explain that; but, in order to do so, I must first inform you as to the object of my visit to your delightful town. My name is Isaac Warden, as you know; for many years I have been engaged in mercantile business and have been what most men would term very successful. I have made a great deal of money and have been wise in my generation; I have saved it, which is more to the point. I retired several years ago, a sufficiency of money and a family trouble causing me to long for rest. But show me the man who has passed all the earlier portion of his life in the stirring element of trade, who can throw it aside like an old glove, and be content to rest, and spend his money. I soon grew tired of rest, and began to look about me for something to invest a portion of my capital in—something that would afford a certain amount of excitement, and would bring ample return for the investment. Through the advice of several friends, I at last hit upon the coal and iron mining trade as a good speculation. I investigated the business and finally came to the conclusion that I would buy stock in some responsible company. But there

came a difficulty. I could not make up my mind in which company to invest. I then determined to take a trip up in this country, where there is such a wealth of mineral product. Here I found several individual owners, yourself among the rest.

"I made inquiry regarding the different mines, and found that the one owned by yourself was the best paying one. At that time I had never met you. Accident brought us together later on. I wandered about the vicinity of the mines all one day; in fact night overtook me before I started to return to my hotel. Passing near your property I heard the sound of some one talking, and drawing nearer found it to be yourself. I heard all you said, and agreed with you thoroughly. So that is how I happened to be present that night, and become more intimately acquainted with the coal trade—at least in the *fall* of the article upon my head," with a grimace.

Albert smiled. "I regret that you received such an unfavorable impression upon your visit to my mine."

"Yes—rather a *decided* impression as well; but still, that is over, and now to business. I think I will get well, and as I came down here to invest in a coal mine, what will you take for yours?"

"Well, Mr. Warden, I don't know as I can make you an answer to-day. You see, I have not thought of disposing of it."

"Don't you think that after the trouble you have had and the expression of your ideas that night,

the men will not feel the same toward you as before, and that a change of ownership would be advisable?"

"I do not think that would make any material difference," answered Albert. "No. I would not sell on that account. Of course, all business is conducted for profit. If I could realize sufficient profit from the sale of the mine, I might sell."

"What would you sell for—at what price?"

"I must first consider the matter."

"When can you let me know?"

"In the course of a few days."

"All right; and if you choose to sell, and I can afford it, I will buy."

They sat silent for some time, Isaac Warden closely studying our hero's face. At last he broke out.

"Singular things, these chance resemblances."

Albert looked up.

"Yes," he answered absently.

"You remember the first time I met you, in front of the post-office, and made so bold as to ask your name?"

"Yes; I remember."

"I really thought at that moment that you were an old friend of mine, one I had known some years ago. Of course, after I learned your name and remembered that my friend must be nearly as old as myself at the present time, I saw that I was mistaken; but for the moment I was carried back a quarter of a century. You resemble my friend very

much; are in fact almost a living reproduction of what he was when about your age. Poor fellow! He, too, saw bitter trouble. I hope you will never be obliged to suffer as he did," and Isaac Warden sighed.

Albert looked at him curiously.

"You have interested me," he cried. "This man who resembled me—tell me the history of his trouble; probably by your doing so I may be able to avoid those things that caused his affliction. Forewarned is forearmed, you know."

"I hardly think you will ever suffer as he did, my friend. Your wife I have never seen; but from Doctor Gross' account of her virtues, she must be a paragon. It was through his wife he was stricken."

"Would you feel justified in relating the history? I am sure it must be interesting."

The old gentleman gazed out of the window for fully five minutes. When he again turned his face to our hero, teardrops glistened in the aged eyes.

"It has been many years," he murmured in a choked voice. "It can scarcely make much difference now. You must know, young man, that my own life's story is connected with this history. Memories of the past are sometimes sad; these to me are particularly so. I will tell you the story of my friend; also a portion of my own, as far as it is connected with the other.

CHAPTER XXIV

A FATHER'S TERRIBLE MISTAKE

"About twenty-six years ago, as near as I can remember, I was surprised one day by reading the account of a marriage between a very dear friend, the one whose story I am about to relate, and a certain lady, the daughter of very wealthy parents, also highly connected. It surprised me, I say, for the reason that it had been reported that this same lady was engaged to marry a man much younger than my friend, although not so well connected, nor so well fixed in money matters.

"It caused considerable comment in fashionable circles, for, although my friend was a very well preserved man, decidedly handsome, still he was so much older than his bride, who was but a mere child of fifteen, that it caused people to talk. I took the liberty one day of speaking to him about the matter. He laughed and answered: 'My wife married me through love. She had the free consent of her parents, who provided her with ample dowry, so I know it was not money she wanted. We are very happy, and I do not consider that the world has anything to talk about.'

"I told him about the former report of a previous engagement. He informed me that there had been no other engagement on the part of either, and made some comment on the advisability of people minding their own business. A hint was all I needed. I

did not require kicking to make me understand that he did not wish the subject discussed; so I mentioned it no further, when in his presence.

"Not long after this, I had need of the services of a bookkeeper. I advertised, and through it, secured the services of a young lady who informed me that she had never worked for a livelihood before, but was now obliged to do so, owing to the straitened circumstances in which her family were placed. I took a great interest in the girl, and finally found myself in love with her. Rather foolish for a man of my age; but we cannot always control our hearts. At that time I was known as a hard, strict business man. Many who did not know me accused me of being decidedly mercenary; hard-hearted some termed me. They did not understand me. True, I would not allow any foolish tenderness of heart to stand in the way of my business; but outside of that I do not consider that I was any worse than the majority of business men.

"I finally proposed marriage to my bookkeeper, and found, to my surprise, that she shrank in horror from the proposition. I said no more, at least for some time; but confined my attention strictly to my business relations with her. But the sight of her sweet, young face now growing worn and melancholy each day, once more made me feel as if my life would be better worth living if she but shared it, and so I made bold to press my suit. I asked her the second time. This time I was more successful. She became my wife.

"I met my friend a few days after the wedding, and an unmerciful chaffing he gave me. 'Think of it,' he cried. 'Old Isaac Warden marrying his book-keeper. Who is the biggest fool now, you or me?'

"I attempted gruffness, used his own words that it was nobody's business, and all that, but it had no effect upon him. 'There is no excuse,' he cried. 'You are the same as all men, and do you know what you have done?' he added.

"'Married a good, virtuous girl,' I answered.

"'That may all be,' he said. 'But you have married the sister of the young man you connected my wife's name with a short time ago. The man you stated she had been engaged to before marrying me.'

"This took me by surprise. I was not aware of the fact, although when I began to think the matter over, I saw that the names were similar. It must be true.

"'What difference does that make?' I growled.

"'None that I know of; only it seems as if you were determined to have some connection with that family in some way. You could not have my wife married to the brother, so you must needs marry the sister.'

"I began to get angry. I told him I had merely heard the fact of the previous engagement of his wife mentioned in the circle in which I moved. He grew sober.

'It was not true,' he said. 'They have known each other from childhood; nothing more. Why,

"I HAVE THIS NIGHT BEEN AN EYE WITNESS TO MY WIFE'S INFIDELITY."—Page 186.

the young man visits my house constantly. We are the best of friends, and I would not think of going anywhere to any place of amusement without asking him to accompany us.'

"'Does he ever go with your wife, as a companion, when you are not able to go?'

"He flushed.

"'Sometimes,' he answered. 'But that is all right.'

"'Ah,' I cried. 'I suppose so,' and left him. I had discovered one thing, and that was that my friend was slightly inclined to be jealous.

"I hurried home, my wife was not there. It was late when she returned. She informed me that she had been to visit her brother. I said nothing. I did not object to these visits.

"A few months passed by. My friend's wife had presented him with a beautiful boy, and naturally he felt proud of it. She recovered, and in the drives and walks which she took from that time out, my wife's brother accompanied her. People began to talk; there are always a number of busybodies ready to cause trouble and dissension. They said it was singular that the husband could not see what his wife was doing, how completely she was pulling the wool over his eyes. I must admit, it did look suspicious. I even began to have my doubts about it. So much so, in fact, that I forbade my wife from visiting her brother at all, fearful that her association with him might lead her to act in the same manner as my friend's wife was do-

ing. 'Evil communications corrupt good morals,' you know; at least that is the way I reasoned. I shall never forget the look of hatred my wife cast upon me when I told her of my wishes. It incensed me at that time, and feeling that she would take advantage of my absence to disobey me, I had her watched; but I afterward discovered that she had been shrewder than any of us, and had met her brother several times after.

"At last my friend heard the talk and was influenced by it. He began to watch his wife, and I could see the demon of jealousy had taken possession of his mind. It went on until one night, as I was sitting in my study at home, I was startled by hearing a hasty ring at the door bell. The hour was late; I was sitting up waiting for my wife to return home. I had found her absent upon reaching the house; so I hurried to the door myself. I started back in surprise. It was my friend, and sleeping in his arms was his baby boy.

"He brushed past me into the study. I closed the door and followed him. He had laid the sleeping child upon a lounge and was pacing the floor.

"'It is all over, Isaac,' he cried as I entered.

"'What?' I asked in astonishment.

"'I have this night been an eye witness to my wife's infidelity. I saw her in the park with that ungrateful hound. I saw all that passed between them. God help me, I wonder that I did not kill them both.'

"I sat in dumb amazement. Could this be possi-

ble? If so, where was my wife? Evidently it was not her brother that she went to meet.

"'What are you going to do?' I asked.

"'Going to put the breadth of the country between us,' he answered.

"'Going to leave her!' I cried.

"'Yes; and my boy goes with me. He shall not be brought up under his mother's damning influence.'

"'But your property, man. Your stocks.' I was thinking of the money.

"'You know about how much I am worth, Isaac. I have come to see you about it. I shall not need these things any longer. I have nothing left to live for, save my boy. He will not need property. Money is what he will find the most use for. I want money. I come to you for it.'"

"'But I cannot give it to you,' I cried. 'I do not keep a great amount in the house.'

"He stopped and looked in my face. He looked like a wild man.

"'Isaac Warden,' he said. 'My property, all told, is worth nearly two hundred thousand dollars. It is nearly all preferred stocks, and real estate. Give me your check for fifty thousand and I will give you a receipt in full for all my property with a description thereof, and instructions to my lawyers and brokers to transfer it. Don't make any objections. I will not listen to them. You will have no trouble about the matters. I will write my people about it, and my signature is well known. Come; I am hurried.'

"I tried to reason with him; he would not listen to me, and so with a heavy heart, I wrote the check and received in return the receipt and letters he had spoken of. He left the house. I never saw him again.

"I determined after he had gone not to take advantage of this act of mad folly; but to allow the property to remain as it was, merely making a memorandum of the amount I had advanced, thinking that some day he would return, and I could then return him his property, he repaying me the loan.

"He never returned.

"An hour after his departure, I heard the sound of a key being stealthily inserted in the lock of the front door. I hurried out into the corridor. It was my wife. I met her face to face. Sternly I demanded an explanation. She haughtily informed me that she had been with her brother. I told her she had not. I thought she lied.

"'If you doubt my word, sir, I shall offer no further explanation,' she said, and swept past me up the stairs.

"From that day out, for months, we did not speak, I believing her false; she, grossly insulted by my words. Two days passed by and then the papers came out and chronicled the sad affair. 'A mystery,' they headed it. Reading the account, I learned that the husband's desertion was known to everyone, and that the wife had become insane from the affair. 'Hopelessly Insane,' they stated; but I was more than astonished to learn that the young man

who had been the cause of all this trouble had been one of the passengers of an outgoing ship, bound for Liverpool, leaving the day following. I must confess I did not understand this. It he had really been guilty of criminal association with the wife, why did he now desert her, after causing the separation, unless through fear? I learned upon inquiring that he was employed by a well known firm. They had sent him to Europe. He had not fled. The young wife was confined in an asylum for the insane. She remained there for many years. Her parents both died broken hearted, and the last I heard of this poor, young creature was that she had been removed from the asylum by some relatives, not entirely cured, but much better than she had been. We never heard of the husband. He may be even now living somewhere, believing his young wife guilty, rearing his son in ignorance of his mother."

Albert had risen from his seat during the old gentleman's story. Part of it sounded strangely familiar. Where had he heard it before? He puzzled his brain. He knew it had been told him by some one. By whom, he could not at that moment recall.

He gave over trying to think.

"Was she guilty?" he asked.

Isaac Warden hesitated.

"I did not finish," he said sadly. "This portion of the history touches me deeply. But as I have started, I will finish. No. She was not guilty. Her innocence was proven when too late, after the father

and mother had departed this world, believing their daughter a sinful wretch; loving her despite it all, however. After the departure of her brother, my wife seldom left the house. She grew melancholy, and seemed to derive no pleasure from anything. At last she was taken very ill—in fact, confined to her bed. The physicians shook their heads when they visited her, and told me at last that no earthly power could save her.

"'She is killing herself with restrained grief,' they told me.

"I went to her bedside one night. She shuddered as I approached her. She did not wish to speak to me. She had never loved me, and my accusation that night had turned her young heart against me.

"I fell upon my knees by her side, and begged her forgiveness. She coldly answered that my cruelty had killed her; that she could not grant my prayer.

"'You doubted my virtue,' she said. Hastily I told her the story of my friend; told her why I doubted her.

"'He saw his wife with your brother at the same hour that you claimed to have met him.'

"'And has that caused the separation—all this misery?' she asked.

"I answered in the affirmative.

"'Then may God forgive him,' she murmured. 'It was I he saw,' and she told me how she had been in the habit of meeting her brother in this

park; how he had sent her word this particular day that he was going to Liverpool the following morning; how she had met him for the last time, had been with him up to a late hour. I saw that she was telling the truth, and knew then that Hubert Greyson's wife was innocent."

Albert started forward.

"Whose wife?" he gasped.

"Hubert Greyson's. Is the name familiar?"

A strange thought had flashed through his mind. He dared not think it; it was too terrible.

"The name of the brother of your wife!" he cried.

"The brother, Henry Rodney, my wife, Emma Rodney."

Our hero fell upon a lounge. He remembered when he had heard this story before—that is a greater portion of it. He recalled the death of his father, and the friend who had died at the same time. It could scarcely be that two stories of this kind could exist; two men in the world be guilty of such a terrible mistake?

Isaac Warden was watching him curiously.

"You are affected by this recital," he cried.

Albert arose.

"Far more than you think," he answered, pacing the floor. "I have heard a portion of it before related to me by a dying man."

"And that man?"

"Hubert Andrews, my father."

"Your father!"

"Aye, my father, foully murdered—murdered as he

strove, by the turn of the card, to win gold to enable him to begin the search for that wife he had cruelly wronged."

"But how did he become informed?"

"By the return to America of him who had been the innocent cause of all this suffering—Henry Rodney."

"My God! Can this be true?"

"As I tell you."

"Then Albert Andrews, Hubert Greyson was your father, and I have told you the story of your own early life—of your father's terrible mistake, of your mother's unhappy fate."

Albert fell into the nearest chair. He knew he spoke the truth.

CHAPTER XXV

JOHN BARTON'S REPLY

The minutes dragged by. The ticking of the clock upon the mantel sounding sharply and distinctly, as the two men sat as in a daze, Isaac Warden astounded at the strange discovery he had made; Albert Greyson, for such we must now call him, bewildered, dumbfounded. Finally Warden spoke.

"And where is Rodney?" he asked in a low tone.

"Dead. Murdered at the same time as my father," Albert hoarsely answered.

"Gone to meet his sister," solemnly said Warden. "She died an hour after freeing your mother's

character from guilty stain. She forgave me before her death."

Tears stood in his eyes. Albert scarcely heard him.

"And your mother, have you heard aught of her?" came the sound of the old man's voice.

Albert looked up.

"Not one word. I had no clue. Neither my father nor Rodney had any knowledge of her whereabouts. They did not know her horrible fate."

"Did your father inform you of all?"

"Yes; of his treatment of her. As the death sweat stood upon his brow he told me of the meeting in the park that he had witnessed; of his flight, of Rodney's return, of their meeting but a few hours before upon the mountain side, and Rodney's explanation. Just before he died he gasped, "Go find mother. Name—not Andrews. Mother's name—" and then he died. I did not even know the place of my birth, he did not tell me that."

"Then you do not know whether your mother is alive or dead."

"I know only what you have told me."

"What shall you do?"

Albert arose from his chair. The setting sun shone in at the window, shining full on his face, glorifying him for the moment with its expiring rays.

"I shall find her," he cried. "I have wealth; every penny of it shall be expended but what I shall find that wronged mother and whisper in her ear

that her husband, my father, passed away, knowing her to be innocent. The world shall be searched. I shall find her."

Tap—tap. A knock at the door.

"Come in."

It was Jupiter—Jupiter with a bundle of letters.

"De evenin' mail, Mister Al," he said, and, depositing it upon the table, he left the room.

Mechanically the dazed man looked it over. One by one he threw the letters from him, until at last, with a cry, he paused, holding in his hand one with a foreign stamp upon it. It was postmarked "Melbourne, Australia."

He heard the voice of his companion, as he stood staring at the bold superscription, half fearful of breaking the seal of this which would give him information regarding his wife's son, and possibly of her past life.

"His wife's lost son?"

Yes. They must be brought together. His father's life had been wrecked; his mother's made sorrowful; but his own darling wife should never know grief or woe. He would find her boy, whom she called for in her dreams; also that dear mother. They would be a happy family, united in peace and love. The voice said—the voice of Isaac Warden—"I should not think there would be much trouble in ascertaining your mother's whereabouts, living or dead. I know the name of the physician in charge of the asylum, and also the names of the relatives who removed her from his care."

He looked up.

"Pardon me," he said. "I scarcely heard you. You say—"

"That I know the names of the relatives who took your mother from the asylum; also the doctor. The relatives formerly lived in Australia, and I think returned there shortly after."

"Australia?"

Why does this uncontrollable feeling of horror, this terrible presentiment, creep over his soul? "Australia." There are plenty of people upon that continent.

"What part of Australia?" he asks.

"Melbourne."

Melbourne! He holds an unopened letter in his hand from Melbourne. A letter that is to be the means of bringing his wife and her lost son together.

"Yes, Melbourne." He scarcely hears himself speak. "The relatives' name—you know it?"

"Well: John Barton."

My God! He holds a letter in his hand from John Barton—*John Barton, of Melbourne, Australia!* Can there be two John Bartons of Melbourne? It is growing dark—too dark to read the letter. He will wait until after he has eaten his supper.

"Read it; read it now," cries a voice in his heart.

"It is too dark; I cannot see," he reasons.

"Light the gas. There are matches on the table. Light the gas and read the letter from John Barton, of Melbourne, Australia. It will tell you of your

wife's long lost son. It will be the means of bringing them together."

"You are startled at the appearance of this letter, which you are staring at," cries Isaac Warden.

"Am I? Oh! I—don't know. It is from Melbourne."

"Who do you know in Melbourne?"

"Many people. I have resided there."

"Light the gas—light the gas," persists the voice.

He finds a match; there is one upon the table. He strikes it upon his boot, he turns on the gas, and then—tears open the envelope. He begins reading. Isaac Warden watches him curiously. He stops.

"What is the doctor's name in charge of the asylum where my mother was confined?" he asks absently.

"Doctor Roberts."

Doctor Roberts—yes, he remembers Doctor Roberts. He had seemed to be acquainted with his wife; had mistaken her for a former patient—for a—*Mrs. Greyson—Greyson.* Singular how many people there are of the same name. Hubert Greyson, Mrs. Greyson—John Barton—Doctor Roberts. Strange; what can this mean?

He feels Isaac Warden's eyes upon him. He stops the perusal of this letter which he has been all eagerness to receive.

"I will take it to my room," he says to himself. "I must not allow the prying eyes of this man, Isaac Warden, to notice my emotion. Yes; I will take it to my room and finish it there."

"Does the letter speak of Doctor Roberts?" asks Warden.

"Merely mentions his name; that is all."

He goes to the door. He turns and looks back upon Isaac Warden. "You knew my father?" he asks.

"He was my dearest friend."

"When grief struck its deadly blow did it change him much?"

"I hardly knew him the night he called upon me. He had grown old in a few hours."

He left the room. He felt an unaccountable feeling at his heart—felt as if it were ready to burst.

Why this feeling? The portion of the letter he had read was not so appalling. Why should he feel this way?

Presentiment.

"Bah! Superstition!" he cries.

He crosses the corridor to his room. It is in darkness. He finds a match and lights the gas.

Then, sitting in his favorite chair, he starts to finish the reading of John Barton's letter.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEWS THE LETTER BROUGHT

Melbourne, Australia, May 1st, 18—.

MR. ALBERT ANDREWS, D——, Pa, U. S. A. Dear Sir: Your letter announcing the circumstances of your marriage to my niece, and also of the birth of two little ones, and desiring knowledge that may lead to the discovery of the son of a former marriage lies before me. To say that its appearance

created surprise in our peaceful home would be but inadequate to describe the impression it created. We really thought our niece dead. We heard of the rescue, but have never heard from her. It was natural that we should mourn her as one no longer in the land of the living. I can understand her reason for not writing, now that I have heard from you, and gladly do I take my pen to try and assist you in your laudable undertaking, although I must confess my doubts as to its successful termination. In order that you can thoroughly understand the facts of the case, I must go back many years. It is but right that you, as the husband of my niece, should know everything, and although I dislike to recall these things, still, I consider it my duty. Your wife was the daughter of my brother, Alonzo Barton. At a very early age she was married to a man many years her senior; but a good man, for all that, until certain events that I shall hereafter describe took place. They were very happy, so my brother informed me, and were blessed with an infant son, about one year after marriage. About this time the husband grew suspicious of his wife; why, no one ever knew; at least, I never heard that she had given him any cause for the feeling; and finally he deserted her, taking with him the baby boy. This had the effect of driving her insane, and she became an inmate of the celebrated asylum at B—, which at that time was managed by a Dr. George, who, himself becoming afflicted, gave way to a Dr. Roberts, a much younger man, but equally as skilful as his predecessor. He took a great interest in the case of the young wife; but finally pronounced her as incurable. He wrote me to this effect, and advised a change of climate, as the best remedy for the afflicted one. The mother and father had died shortly before, and so upon my shoulders fell the responsibility. I accepted it, and being in America at the time with my wife, answered the doctor's letter in person. I felt naturally a little nervous

about taking charge of the afflicted one. Most persons have a fear of those of unsound mind. But the doctor assured me that she was perfectly safe; so I accepted the charge, and returned to my home in Australia, my wife and niece accompanying me. After a time I found that the doctor had been correct in his ideas, the climate of our beautiful land accomplishing wonders for my niece. She grew strong, and well, and I was astonished at the beauty that health brought to the face and form. She was happy and contented, had no thought of her former unhappiness, and probably would never have known of it at all had not an unfortunate event made it necessary for us to inform her. You must understand that the memory of her former life was unknown to her, Doctor Roberts claiming that her mind would ever be a blank as far as that was concerned, and we thought it best to allow her to remain in ignorance of it.

The unfortunate event I speak of was the proposal for her hand, made by a distinguished gentleman of this city. She had been much sought after by many of the wealthy unmarried men of this place, but had refused them all, until Francis Norton presented himself, and then it was different. She came to me one day, and told me of his suit, and with many blushes confessed that she returned his love. This alarmed me and so, thinking that it might be best, I told her of her former marriage. I regretted it after doing so, for it brought back to her mind all the misery that we wished buried in the grave of the past. It was like removing a veil from the face of a horrible thing. Her mind, now vigorous and active, once more recalled all that had formerly been unknown, and the effect was nearly fatal to her, causing a spell of sickness that we thought she would never recover from. But she pulled through and we were gratified to see that the knowledge now in her power had not produced any detrimental effect upon her mind. She came

to me one day, and surprised me with the following words: "Uncle John: You remember I told you of Mr. Norton's proposal, before my sickness?" "Yes," I answered, wondering what was coming. "You thought it best to tell me of my unhappy past, that alas, comes more vividly to me each day. Now, Uncle John; I am going to surprise *you*. Your words were well meant. I am glad you told me all, but they have not changed my determination. I love Mr. Norton. I am going to marry him." I stood aghast. "But your first husband," I cried. She smiled a smile of bitterness. "There is such a thing as divorce," she answered. I had never thought of that. I saw that it was practicable according to the laws of our country, and to make a long story short we obtained one. She married Francis Norton, and lived happily for a short time. But it seemed as if some strange fatality followed her footsteps. Her happiness was destined to be brought to an abrupt close. Her husband was brought home to her one night dead. He had been drowned while bathing. She looked upon his pale face with eyes that showed no signs of tears. She grieved in a different manner—in the heart. For months she was a pitiful object. She loved her second husband and felt his loss; but she recovered and then there came a strong desire to find her boy, the son of the first marriage. We tried to dissuade her from the notion, telling her that he must be dead by this time, or in some far off corner of the world. She was as firm as the rock of Gibraltar upon this subject, and we finally agreed with her. She had made all necessary preparations to start upon her quest when suddenly she changed her mind. We did not ask for any explanation. We were glad that she had so determined. With the change came also a great change in disposition. She became gay and happy again, resumed her place as fashion's queen, and seemed to have forgotten her unhappiness in the scenes of gaiety in

which she mingled. I afterward discovered why she had acted in this manner. She gave me the explanation. It was two weeks before she set sail upon the "Oceanic." She came to me one night in my library. She was magnificently dressed for a ball. "Uncle dear," she called. I looked at her. "Am I beautiful?" "Very, my child." "Would you imagine that thirty-six years had passed over my head?" "No. You look like a woman of twenty." And she did. "I look much younger than I did when I first announced my intention of seeking my son?" "Yes." I could not understand her. "Why do you ask?" "I have never given up that idea, Uncle," she murmured. "And now that I have heard you say that I look younger, more beautiful, I will tell you why I changed my mind at that time. I was packing my last trunk when a glance in the mirror revealed to me the fact that I was looking decidedly haggard and miserable. 'I will never go to my boy looking like a ghost;' I said. "I will forget my sorrows, plunge into the vortex of fashionable follies, and see if I cannot recover my lost beauty.' I did so. You have told me that I am beautiful. Now I shall go to my boy, and also, Uncle John, I shall show myself to that husband who had such little love for me in the olden days as to leave me a heart broken, insane creature, to die, for aught he cared. I am his wife no longer. I am the widow of a man much nobler than he ever was; but I shall have the satisfaction of dazzling his eyes, now growing dim, with my beauty, of making his heart sore with regret, when he sees what he has lost. Oh, I shall find him if he lives, and I shall win the love of my son from that hard hearted father. This is my determination, Uncle. I shall depart for America upon the first steamer that leaves this port." Then she left me, astonished so I could not speak. She kept her word, and I have never laid eyes on her since. I know why she has not written me; because her woman's heart

fell captive to your manly attractions. I sincerely hope she has never had reason to regret her marriage to you, and I feel assured that she will make you a good wife. I censure her for not telling you all, before marriage. It would have been better so. But now you know all her past life, and I don't suppose it will materially affect your love for her. I cannot give you much information regarding the son, for we have not heard one word concerning him or his father since that father deserted his young wife. But I will tell you the name of my niece's first husband and you may be able to trace him by that, although this is doubtful. He probably asumed another. *His name was Hubert Greyson; that of the son, Albert.* Hoping that you will be able to carry out your scheme, and by so doing bring happiness to one so deserving, I remain, Yours truly,

JOHN BARTON,

Seaside Villa, Melbourne, Australia.

P. S. I suppose you are aware that your wife's name is not Frances, as she is generally called. Upon the death of her husband she gave up using her proper name, Agnes, preferring to be called by that of her dead husband. Being a female name with the exception of the one letter, "i," it is generally supposed that it is her proper christian name. Perhaps it is needless to mention this. She would certainly tell you.—J. B.

CHAPTER XXVII

WIFE AND MOTHER

Tick—tick, sounded the clock upon the mantel.

"Whip-poor-will," came the night bird's voice through the open window.

The flaring jet of gas shone down upon the table, upon the open letter, upon the form of the man who

with stony, staring eyes looked down upon the pages before him. He heard not the ticking of the clock, the sound of the night bird's plaintive notes. The murmuring of the wind among the branches of the tree that shaded his window struck upon deaf ears. He saw only the too plainly written words that carried grim despair to his soul. He heard only the beating of his heart, as it throbbed in his bosom.

"Will it break?" he thought with dumb, dazed curiosity. "Will I become a maniac—a gibbering, raving creature, to be confined behind iron bars?" He awaited with eagerness some indication that would betoken forgetfulness. He pinched himself roughly to assure himself that it was not a horrible dream—this letter.

No. He could still remember. He was not asleep, nor dreaming. For an hour he sat before the table; for sixty long minutes the brain struggled to grasp the true meaning of the horrible fact.

It came. He knew it was true, and the head fell forward upon the table, upon the open letter whose words burned into his soul, into his heart.

"*The name is Hubert Greyson; the son's Albert!*"

Hubert Greyson!

"My God!" His father, his darling wife's first husband! His own father! He, the son, Albert! Wife? No—mother! Wife and mother! Wife and mother!

The words danced through his brain. Wife and mother!

He had married his own mother!

Great heaven! it cannot be true! It is too infamous—too horrible! She, that fair, beautiful creature, the mother who had brought him into the world. She *the mother of his own children*—of little Rose; of that other, still unnamed. He arose and looked at his reflection in the mirror. He saw a pale, haggard face, wild, glaring eyes, unkempt hair.

"I am going mad," he muttered. "I shall forget in my mania all this."

He thanked God that it was so.

But she, the wife, the mother; what of her? She must know it. Their present life must be broken up—this life of crime. Was it crime? They were both innocent of sinful thought. Yes, crime, in the eyes of the world. How the world would talk; how they would pass the delicious morsel from mouth to mouth, until the very air would resound with the story of shame!

"Married his own mother!" they would cry, and then some, not one half as pure, some with tarnished names, would look horrified and carry the news to some one else.

And the papers!

How they would pick it to pieces; how the reporters would fly to learn the facts of the case; how the editors would chronicle with ghoulish glee!

How would they head it?

"*The Last Sensation!*"

No. Not that. That would not be sufficiently startling.

"*Married His Own Mother!*'

Yes; that was better. That is how the story of his shame would be headed, with staring capitals.

"Oh, God, destroy me, miserable wretch that I am. Destroy me before I look into that sweet face again—gaze into those soulful eyes."

"How would she take it—that wife? No. How strange, I cannot forget that—MOTHER! That is the title,—Mother! How will she take it? Will she fall dead when she hears the terrible news? Will the beautiful eyes grow wild, and the low, tender voice break forth in mad ravings? Ah. She has been mad before. His father made her so. Cruel desertion. Better than this crime. Will she become so again? Doctor Roberts had said so. He should know. He is a skilful physician. Yes. She will surely go mad. Why am I not so? I am growing impatient. It is time that my brain gave way. Is not the misery great enough?

"The children, poor little creatures! Little Rose, with her childish prattle, her loving ways. She is Papa's girl. Oh, God! Papa's girl! She loves Papa—poor child. She has no father—the offspring of crime. Crime such as man has never seen before. What will become of her?"

And the other; she has no name yet. She can never have. What is this? "Madame Tissal's Dream Revelator and Fortune Teller." Bah! It lies! No: it has told the truth this time. *Cursed in her infancy. What will become of the nameless babies?*

"Oh, Heaven, destroy me!"

What is that? an answer from heaven?

"Look in your bureau drawer—the top drawer."

"Why shall I look?"

"Look in the drawer; look in the drawer."

It is the voice in his heart.

The drawer is opened. Ah, thank God, a means of deliverance.

A revolver!

Yes; it is loaded. He always keeps it loaded.

"Better this than to face her. Farewell, wife. No—mother. Wife and mother! Farewell, little Rose. Farewell, prattling babe, cursed in your infancy. I have been very happy. It is over now. I must go to meet my father, to call him to account. Yes, for his action has brought about this crime. Forgive me, all. It is better so."

A piercing scream at the door.

"Merciful heaven, Albert! What are you going to do?"

"Papa—my Papa."

He sinks into a chair. The child runs to him.

"Take me, Papa; I am your baby girl."

A groan from the unhappy man. His wife and darling child. It must be told them. No. The child cannot understand it; but *she* can. She must be told. He feels the soft, cool hand upon his burning brow.

"What were you about to do, my husband?" the voice is tearful and anxious.

He rises and throws off the hand. She calls him husband. She does not know.

"No! Not husband!" he cries hoarsely. He never forgets the look of pain in her beautiful eyes. His mother's eyes. He could almost laugh, it seems so ridiculous to his feverish fancy.

"Not husband," she speaks in a whisper—a wondering whisper.

"No—listen: You have a son by your first husband—by Hubert Greyson."

She shrinks from him; she averts her face.

"Not that name," she murmurs.

"Answer. You have a son living?"

"Yes, yes," low and frightened. Then, falling upon her knees, "forgive me for not telling you. I loved you so. I loved you so."

He remembers; she has murmured those words in her dreams.

"You seek for him?" his voice sounds harsh and unreal.

"Yes—yes. What of him?" eagerly.

"I have found him."

"Thank God!" She rises; her face has grown divinely beautiful in her mother's eagerness.

"Look upon him."

She glances about the room. She sees none save her husband and the half frightened child, clinging to his knee.

"Where, Albert; where is my boy?"

"Here, wife; here, mother! I am your son, Hubert Greyson was my father.

The clock ticks. The wind still murmurs through the trees. The wife looks upon the husband with

wild, startled eyes. She does not understand him!

Is this some ghastly joke? Is her husband bereft of reason?

"I do not understand you, Albert."

He points to the open letters; she reads all, every word. She understands it now.

One wild shriek, that arouses the sleeping echoes, and startles the servants below; a violent swaying of the beautiful form, and she falls upon the carpet. Isaac Warden hears the cry. The doctor has forbidden him to leave his room.

"The doctor be d—d," he mutters, as he thinks of it, and he makes the best of his way to the room from which the cry has proceeded.

A crowd of servants are standing in the door as he draws near. He brushes them aside. He sees the extended form upon the rich carpet. He sees a frightened child crying in baby tones for its mother. He sees a wild, haggard man pacing the floor, with hands entangled in the waving hair. The man sees him.

"Ah! Isaac Warden, the friend of my father; you knew him. You told me grief made him old in a night. Look at me! I am his son. Do you think it has altered me? Do I show it? Do I look any older? Ah, Isaac Warden, congratulate me. I have need of your words of pleasure. I have been successful. I have had no difficulty in mysearch. I have found my mother. There she lies!"

Isaac Warden hurries to the side of the woman;

HE SINKS INTO A CHAIR AS THE CHILD APPROACHES HIM.—Page 206.

he raises the beautiful head, the face is turned toward the floor. He turns it over.

"Great heaven!" he cries.

He recognizes her.

He understands all.

"Ah! You knew my mother in her girlish beauty. Is she not more beautiful now than then? Is not her face divine? Ha—ha—ha! Beautiful indeed. It captivated the heart of her son.

"It has held the love of her husband!"

A wild cry, a maniacal laugh, and there are two forms upon the carpet.

The child cries.

"Peace, little darling," says old Isaac Warden.

She runs to him.

"Is Papa and Mamma sick?" she cries.

The old gentleman groans.

"Yes, child; very sick."

He knows they are sick of life.

God help these little ones.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AN EDITORIAL FROM THE WORLD

"Never in the history of our land has there been recorded such an unheard-of calamity as that which has befallen the happy home of Albert Andrews, or Greyson, one of our wealthiest mine owners and influential citizens.

It is impossible for the mind of man to imagine the weight of woe that has fallen in a few short

hours upon the hearts of himself and wife. Possessed of wealth, two beautiful children, all that goes to make the world a pleasant place to live in, in a day all is swept away. The happy home is broken up; the stricken man driven nearly insane; his beloved companion laid low upon a bed of sickness from which she may never arise, and if so, her life will no longer be worth the living. Married to his own mother! It seems the hideous phantom of a diseased imagination. We have published the full account of the lives of these two, and our readers can readily see that no blame can be attached to either. They are both guilty of a horrible crime in the eyes of the law; yet are they innocent. The crime was committed unconsciously; still that fact makes it none the less appalling. A father's mistake in years gone by, has been the cause of it all.

A divorce has been granted by our courts, which was hardly necessary, as the marriage was not a legal one at any rate. Still, out of sympathy for the principals in the unfortunate affair, our courts have granted the divorce.

It is a terrible thing to contemplate, the future of the two innocent children. They cannot, by law, lay claim to any part of the estates of the father, and the mother possesses no property, save that which she is entitled to as the widow of Hubert Greyson; her rightful third. Being no marriage, the children are really illegitimate, and we shudder to think of the blight put upon their lives—the horrible stain of an unconscious crime, for which they are not responsible, but which will certainly affect them in after years, if they should live. It would be infinitely better for them if the Divine Creator of all saw fit in his wisdom to remove them from the earth before the full knowledge of their painful situation becomes known to them. From latest reports we hear that the unhappy man contemplates selling his property, even at a sacrifice, and leaving the country. It seems hard that he must desert that

mother, who has become known to him for the first time in life; that wife who has been the very ideal of his heart; leaving her to bear it all, in case of her surviving the terrible blow. But it is evident to all that it is the only plan to pursue. It is better so. Mr. Isaac Warden, to whom we are indebted for many of the facts, assures us that he will assume the guardianship of the little ones, in case of the death of the mother, and will do all that lies in his power to have them educated in a proper manner, keeping the story of their unfortunate parents from them.

The uncle of Mrs. Greyson—Mr. John Barton, of Melbourne, Australia, has been cabled, and will probably provide for his niece, as we understand that she is the only living relative he has upon earth, with the exception of his wife.

We sincerely hope that the matter will fade from public memory as soon as possible, and that the charity which 'covereth a multitude of sins,' will be extended to the unfortunate beings connected with the sad affair. To use a hackneyed expression: 'Verily, truth is stranger than fiction.'"

CHAPTER XXIX

TOLD BY ISAAC WARDEN

"I have just come from seeing my unhappy friend, Albert Greyson, off upon the steamer bound for Liverpool, to begin the wanderings which must continue until the day of his death, and, somehow or other, I don't think that day far distant. He has lost much flesh, his eyes are sunken deep in their sockets, he has no interest in anything pertaining to life. He wishes for death.

"Can I blame him? No. In my heart I believe it would be better for him.

"The tears stood in his eyes as he clasped my hand at parting.

"'I will never see you again,' he cried. 'Teach my little ones to look upon their father as dead. I am not a bad man, but I have committed a terrible sin. Keep the knowledge of my destination to yourself, my friend. I do not want my actions recorded, providing a theme of conversation for the world. I want to be forgotten. And she, my mother, (I cannot call her wife,) if she recovers, see that she is provided for with the money I have left at her disposal. I kissed her pale face for the last time on earth last night. She did not know me. She was unconscious. I hardly think that she will ever be the same woman again. It will be a kind of Providence if she never recovers. Poor woman! Deserted by the father, cursed by the son.'

"I saw him standing upon the deck as the mighty steamer faded from view. Gone out into the world, a wanderer upon the face of the earth. I shall wait until John Barton answers my cablegram, or comes in person, before I shall decide what is best to be done. I am an old man. I cannot live many years, and it would be better for him, as a relative of the family, to assume the responsibility of the children's future life, rather than do so myself. Still, I shall do what is right. They shall not be left alone in the world without a friend. Dr. Gross says that it is very doubtful if Agnes ever recovers. If she

should arise from her bed of sickness she will never have the use of her faculties again. Ah me! It is a sad affair all through. I read in the papers some days ago that that estimable man and good physician, Dr. Roberts, has been compelled to give up his position on account of ill health. He has devoted too much of his valuable life to the study of his profession. He is going to Europe, so I understand. He will be shocked when the sad news reaches him. I dread to think of the future of these poor little ones. I wonder how it will all end."

CHAPTER XXX

REFLECTED IN THE WATERS

Midsummer.

With its blazing, burning sun; with its sudden and unexpected showers; with its plentiful harvest of golden grain and sweetly scented clover. Midsummer in all its glory.

It has been a very warm day. Since early morning the rays of "Old Sol" have increased in burning intensity until at one o'clock, the mercury in the thermometer hanging at the door fairly bubbles at 100° in the shade.

The harvesters are resting beneath the shade of the larger trees that form a boundary line between two large estates. They prefer to work until late at night, rather than run the risk of sunstroke in the broad fields.

Two fair maidens industriously fan themselves upon the broad veranda, which extends around the large old fashioned house. Around a house that would arrest the attention of a passing artist, and compel him to sketch its picturesque outlines and reproduce them upon canvas, with the simple title beneath: "An old English Manor." A title well befitting it, for, although the comfortable residence of John Barton is in America, its appearance is such as to remind the traveler through England of one of the many roomy, rambling mansions to be found there.

It is built of grey stone, two stories in height, with massive gables projecting from all sides, its rough, stone walls being nearly hidden from view by the creeping ivy, and its imitator, the Virginia creeper; bright green vines that nearly cover the large gable windows and cluster about the very edge of the roof itself. We have said the maidens upon the veranda were fair. Truly, we have spoken correctly—fairer than the ordinary run of maidens encountered in many days' travel. One, the eldest, apparently, of a dark olive-tinted complexion, the other fair as a lily, with waving bronze hair, upon which the few rays of the sun, shining in from among the trees, rest, as if loth to depart, causing bright scintillations of golden light to reflect among the glorious masses of this, the crowning beauty of woman.

She has been idly gazing out over the broad lawn that extends for some distance before the house, down to the edge of a rippling stream, disguised by

the name of lake. It is really a lake, being surrounded by land, and a very pretty lake, too, at that; but a lake in miniature.

"My! how warm," she murmurs, falling back lazily in the reclining chair. "I dislike warm weather. It is such an effort to amuse one's self. The butter is invariably soft, the flies will insist upon drowning themselves in the milk, the sun will shine directly in your eyes, when you wish to read, and, altogether, warm weather is decidedly unpleasant."

Her companion smiles.

"A small portion of ice on the butter, a napkin over the milk pitcher, a sequestered spot on the shady side of the house, will counteract the unpleasantness you have spoken of as part of glorious summer, Lilla dear. We cannot have all things as we should like them. I am sure it is not very warm here."

The other laughs.

"You invariably bring your common sense to bear upon any subject I introduce, Rose," she says. "It is not as warm here, as out in the fields, where the poor men are roasting their brains in harvesting; but, still, it is warm enough. I wonder how the thermometer really stands." She rises and goes to the invention of Fahrenheit—that good man, who gave suffering humanity the means of ascertaining how much they were really suffering.

"Why, it is one hundred, and in the shade, too. I think that is warm enough for any one. It is re-

freshing to look at the thermometer, and see that there is a freezing point. It makes one cooler to think of it. I wonder why there is not a roasting point. It would be amazingly in keeping with the weather." She stands by the door, looking at the instrument as she speaks. A young man has come up the gravel walk, and approaches her unseen. A young man, decidedly handsome, with mischief gleaming in his blue eyes, and a smile upon the parted lips, as he creeps stealthily toward her, with a gesture of silence to the other, who observes him. He places his hands over the eyes of the golden haired beauty.

A slight scream.

"That is you, Harry," she cries.

No answer.

"Well, if it ain't Harry, it must be Charley."

"Right!" cries the new comer. "It is Charley," and he removes the firm, white hands. "May I inquire what causes this intense interest in the indicator of heat and cold?"

"Why, certainly you can, you hateful thing. After mussing up my frizzes with your hands, you can go on inquiring all day. I am not compelled to answer you;" and the pouting beauty returns to her chair and does not deign to notice him further.

He stands at the back of her chair.

"And is Lilla angry at Charley,?" he cries, teasingly.

She fans herself vigorously.

"Come, I was only joking."

"You have no business to joke, when the weather is so warm, and it is so hard to keep your hair in curl," she snaps.

"I beg your pardon."

"Go to Rose. You came to see her anyhow; you have no business to waste your time with me."

Rose flushes and Charley whistles.

"Why, Lilla, Charley comes to see us both," cries the dark one.

"Do you think I am a fool?" cries Lilla. "I have two eyes and I can put them to very good use. Now, shall I tell you what my eyes see? Well; when Mr. Charley Atkinson comes to the house of John Barton, he invariably asks for the Misses Barton, not Rose nor Lilla, but the *Misses* Barton. He does this to make it appear as though he merely called to pass away a few hours of his valueless time in the society of these two 'very charming young ladies,' as the papers state."

"Lilla!" cries Rose, warningly.

"Never mind. I've started and I shall finish."

"Is it not rather warm for such an effort?" remarks Charley.

"You keep quiet!" snaps the imperturbable one. "The Misses Barton are ever glad to see their friend, Mr. Charles Atkinson; but I always notice that whenever an opportunity presents itself, Mr. Atkinson inveigles Miss Rose into some out-of-the-way spot, leaving Miss Lilla to do the best she can. You need not deny it. You know I am

speaking the truth. There is a guilty flush upon your countenances."

"Nonsense!" cries the young man, his face feeling decidedly warm. "I am a friend of the family."

"Certainly; of the *Rose* portion of the family. If you are so much of a friend of the family, why don't you go in and read to poor old Uncle John, once in a while; instead of walking all over the surrounding country and sailing or rowing on the lake with Rose, keeping me awake waiting for her until midnight? Oh, I know you. Precious little *you* care for the family, Charley Atkinson," and thus delivering her opinion, she deliberately turns her back upon the two and hums the fragment of a song.

"I am going to prove that you are unjust," says Charley. "I have come to invite you both to attend Mrs. Boothby's lawn party, at three. I would like you to attend."

"Sha'n't go," cries obstinate Lilla.

"And why not?"

"In the first place, because you would rather go alone with Rose. In the second place, because it is too warm."

"Now, Lilla, don't be obstinate," remonstrates Rose.

"I am not obstinate," answers Lilla. "I don't feel inclined to visit Mrs. Boothby. She and I are not good friends; she spoke of me to Mr. Brown as "that red-headed girl of Barton's," and I have never spoken to her since. I am *not* red-headed, and I consider her words an insult."

"Are you sure she said that?" asks Charley, gravely.

"I heard her. My ears are good."

"And your tongue," thinks Charley.

"She did not mean it," says Rose, in a conciliatory manner.

"She had no business to say it."

"I would not cherish malice."

"I am not malicious, Rose Barton. Besides I have another reason for not wishing to go."

"Well?"

"Well what?"

"What is your other reason?"

"Well, if you *must* know: The weather is too warm, and I know I shall perspire, and I have not any dress shields to my light dresses and I will ruin them."

Charley laughs, and Rose gets red in the face.

"You should not speak of such things before a gentleman," she says.

Lilla arises from her chair.

"If you don't want me to tell the truth before gentlemen, why do you ask me?" she retorts.

"I never imagined such a ridiculous answer."

"Ridiculous! Well, you are a cool one, Miss Rose Barton. I'll go away. You can go to the lawn party at Mrs. Boothby's and I'll go out in the barn and amuse myself with the puppies. Their dumb society is sufficient for me. One satisfaction: they can't speak, and I prefer them to two-legged puppies," and she darts off in the direction of the barn.

Rose looks up in Charley's face.

"I wonder if she had reference to me," asks that gentleman.

"No, of course not," replies Rose. "Lilla is a strange girl. She says many things that she does not mean."

"Oh, does she?" absently.

"Yes. She is a great pet, you know, and Uncle John gives her her own way in everything."

"And you?"

"Oh, I'm older. I am no longer a child."

"You are a charming woman," he cries.

"No flattery, Mr. Atkinson, or I will believe that Lilla is right."

"In what respect—that I am a two-legged puppy?"

"She did not say you were a puppy. No; not that. She remarked your fondness for my society."

"And suppose I say she is right?"

"You must not say it. Remember, I took your part. You are a friend of the family—nothing more."

He seizes her hand.

"She is right," he murmurs. "And so are you. I *am* a friend of the family; but must confess my partiality for one member, above the others."

"Is it not warm?" she asks to change the subject.

"Decidedly so," he cries, not meaning the weather.

"I wonder if it will grow cooler by evening?"

"Never!" he cries. "Never. Even at the evening of life."

"What are you talking about?" she asks, turning and looking him in the face. "Are we to be oppressed by this terrific heat all day?"

"Is it oppressive?" he murmurs.

"Why, of course. It is decidedly uncomfortable."

"I regret that."

"Will you explain what you mean?"

"Certainly. I mean the warmth of my love, the heat of my passion."

"I had reference to the weather." She quietly removes her little white hand and looks down at the floor.

"I regret that you find it oppressive, and that its warmth makes you uncomfortable," he says.

"I did not say that," she murmurs. "I was speaking of the heat."

"*It is* warm. What say you to a row upon the lake, keeping near the shore, beneath the shade of the trees?"

"And Mrs. Boothby's lawn party?" she inquires roguishly.

"Bother Mrs. Boothby!" he cries. "If Lilla had gone we should have attended; but as she has refused, I would prefer the lake, unless you wish to go," he hurriedly adds.

"I think I prefer the lake, myself," she says. "It is cooler."

They stroll down to the water. A fancifully painted pleasure boat is confined by a cord to a stake, driven in the bank. She seats herself in the stern, and he casts off the line, and takes up the oars. He is

a perfect oarsman, and a few strokes bring them beneath the spreading branches of the trees that line the west shore. He rows in silence for some time, and then, taking in his oars, allows the boat to drift upon the placid bosom of the lake.

"If it could be ever like this!" he says.

"Like what?" she inquires, leaning over the side of the boat, with one white hand trailing in the clear water.

"Floating on the bosom of the stream of life, with one we love near us."

"Pleasant," she murmurs. "But storms some times come, and then the waters are not so smooth and placid."

He takes the other hand in his own.

"With a good pilot at the helm, the frail craft can be guided safely through the most severe storm. Love, the pilot, tempests affect us not."

She does not answer him. The waters of the lake have developed great interests for the girl.

"Rose," he cries in a low, fervent tone. "Why cannot it ever be?"

"We cannot sail forever;" she answers. "We must return soon."

"Forever on the stream of life," he cries. "My darling! You know I love you. You have surely seen it. You are not blind. Your heart must surely have felt the presence of my passion; yet you avoid me. True, you do not repulse me; but you turn my words to jest. You do not seem to understand me; even Lilla has seen it. You must know it."

She averts her eyes.

"And if I should confess that I *have* seen it; that I know it, and have purposely avoided the topic," she says.

"Then I would say you are cruel."

"The rose is ever cruel. Sharp thorns lurk near, to wound the hand that would pluck it."

"But many succeed, despite the thorns, and wear them in their bosoms as a token of victory." He speaks triumphantly. "My Rose; my cultured tender flower. I have worn you in my heart for years, since I have known you. Can you not give me the privilege of wearing you openly before the world? Of saying: 'This is my treasure—my all—my wife?"

She hesitates.

"Answer me," he cries. "I love you. I would have you for my own. Answer me. Do you not love me?"

He has forgotten all about the boat. It drifts idly on. He hears nothing, save the murmuring of the waters; sees nothing, save the pure, tender face before him.

She is gazing into the water; she hears his voice; she answers:

"Yes. I love you."

He nearly upsets the boat in his eagerness. He clasps her in his arms, and covers her face with kisses.

"And you will be mine?" he cries.

She struggles a little in his arms; but he is

stronger than she, and holds her tight. She submits to his caresses. He awaits her answer.

"I cannot promise you," she whispers. "I must consult my uncle first."

He releases her.

"And is your love not sufficient to give me some definite answer?"

"Charley: I love you enough to sacrifice even life itself for you; but my uncle and aunt are the only parents I have ever known. It would be ungrateful to them to take this step without asking their consent."

He has her in his arms again.

"And if they consent, you will be my wife?"

"Yes."

He repeats the programme, usual upon occasions like this.

The waters of the lake reflect the scene of love.

CHAPTER XXXI

A HEART BOWED DOWN

It is growing dark as these two to whom love has come for the first time leave the boat and walk, arm in arm, toward the house. They have been drifting on the bosom of the lake all the long summer afternoon, heedless of the flight of time, thinking only of the great happiness which has come to them, revelling in the blissful thoughts it brings them. The harvesters pass them as they walk along, with a respectful "good evening, Miss Rose," and an awk-

"LAY THE BLAME UPON MY SHOULDERS."—Page 225.

ward tip of the hat. They have finished their day's work, and are now hurrying home to wife and children, or a mother's caress. Yes; it is growing quite dark.

"You should be punished for keeping me out until this hour," whispers the maiden; but her tone belies her word.

"It is your fault," he answers. "You should not make yourself so fascinating as to cause me to forget myself."

"Uncle John will scold me," she murmurs, not noticing his remark.

"Lay the blame upon my shoulders. I will try to conciliate the old gentleman."

"You will have enough upon your shoulders when you get me."

"I am willing to bear the burden;" and he means it.

They have reached the house; she steps upon the piazza. She gently removes the hand which he is holding as if loth to give it up.

"Must you go in?" he pleads.

"Why, you selfish creature; do you wish to deprive me of my supper?"

"Pardon me," he cries. "I did not think. I am not hungry. I could live upon the music of your voice."

"And starve. Not a very strengthening diet," and she laughs.

"And my answer; when will you speak to your uncle?"

"This very night, Mr. Impatient. I will tell you his decision to-morrow."

"I will call immediately after breakfast.

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to remain all night and then you would be here earlier?" she asks roguishly.

"Don't tease me, Rose. Do you think there is any danger of Mr. Barton refusing to give his consent?" anxiously.

"Do you think I could feel so merry if I thought so?" answers Rose.

They linger for a few moments and then, with a parting embrace they separate, Charley to return to his home, which is not far distant, to dream the live-long night of beautiful Rose Barton. Rose to enter the house and hurry toward the room where she knows supper is awaiting her.

"So you have managed to come at last?" assails her as she makes her appearance. It is Lilla, her sister; lovely Lilla, with her glorious hair floating in a cloud down to her waist, holding two blinking, blear-eyed, furry puppies in her arms, while the mother, a large Shepherd, looks rather anxiously at her, for fear she will injure her babies.

"I was out on the lake," murmurs Rose, as she hurries to her uncle's chair.

"With Charley?" snaps Lilla. "I would not name one of these sweet little creatures Charley for all the world. I think it is a horrid name. Don't you, Bess?" to the dog.

Rose does not notice her. She goes to her uncle,

an old man now, with hair as white as the fleecy clouds, with a gentle, kindly smile upon his face, for these two children whom he loves. The faithful companion for life, his boyhood's love, his wife, sits beside him. She looks up as Rose enters.

"Have I kept you waiting long?" inquires the fair one, kissing them both tenderly.

"Only a few minutes, dear," answers the uncle.

"I was out on the lake."

"With Charley," interposes Lilla.

"Night came on before I noticed it," continues Rose, without noticing the interruption.

"Youth is the time for pleasure," says John Barton. "Make the most of it. Now you are here, we will ring for tea."

They gather around the table, the evening meal is eaten, amid much laughter and sincere happiness.

Lilla shares her supper with her dumb friends, the puppies making sad havoc with the china, as she tries to assist them in eating from her plate.

They adjourn to the library, after tea, where Rose reads aloud to them for an hour, and then they prepare for bed.

Lilla has gone; kissing them all before doing so. Rose approaches her loved relative.

"I would like to speak to you, Uncle John," she says in a low tone; "before you retire," she continues.

He looks at her from over the tops of his spectacles.

"Important business, I suppose," he says, jestingly.

"Important to me, Uncle dear."

The aunt has left the room, probably for the purpose of seeing the house securely locked up before she retires. The good lady has read a great deal about tramps, and burglars, and she is careful of the fastenings each night, seeing that they are secure before retiring.

So they are alone, uncle and niece. He places his wrinkled hand upon her raven braids, and a tender look of love comes to the kindly eyes.

"Well, little girl, I am at your service," he says.

She brings a stool and sits at his feet, a favorite position with her, one she has been accustomed to from early childhood.

The lamp is burning brightly upon the table, casting a mellow reflection upon her, as she sits, a child again, at her uncle's feet.

She tells him the story of her love, speaking of her manly lover in girlish tones of tenderness. She tells him that he has asked her to become his wife. She is not looking at his face; she does not see the look of misery, of intense horror, that comes to the aged face.

"I am to give him my answer in the morning, Uncle," she concludes. "I would not give him a decided answer until I had asked your consent."

He makes no reply. How can he? What can he say to this young loving creature who nestles at his feet? He had been dreading this day to come. He had felt it in his heart, that it must come.

What could he say? It would never do to give his consent to this marriage. The Atkinsons were of an old and honored race, the boy, Charles, the last male descendant of the family, while she, his darling, the loving child who sat before him, she—could boast of nothing but dishonor, disgrace, an inheritance of shame, of crime so horrible that its memory caused a shudder to creep over him.

Must the young life be blighted; the loving heart broken?

She is waiting for his answer. She grows alarmed at his long silence. She looks up in his face and sees the look of stony despair delineated there. She arises and puts one arm about his neck.

"Has my confession startled you, dear?" she asks in alarm.

He answers her in a voice so changed that she hardly recognizes it.

"More than you can imagine," he says. She draws back in surprise. She had not expected this. She had thought he would kiss her fondly, and give his consent with a blessing.

"Why, Uncle, what is there in my story of love to cause you pain?" a look of wounded surprise in the dark eyes.

"Ah, my child, if you only knew," he averts his face; he groans in his anguish.

"Is it because you do not wish to lose me?"

"Not that, darling; although it would be like losing the support of my old age. I could bear it,

for your happiness if it were only that. No—no. It is more than that."

She stands before him, her heart wounded, her large eyes wondering.

"Tell me," she cries. "Tell me what grieves you."

"God help me, child, I cannot."

This is not like her uncle. He has never been like that before. There must be something terrible to cause this look of pain, this aversion to speak.

"You like Charley—Mr. Atkinson?"

"He is a noble boy, of a good family."

"You love me, Uncle dear?"

"You are my treasure."

"You would like to see me happy?"

"If I did not I should not suffer."

"He has asked me to marry him, Uncle. Your consent will make me oh, so happy."

The tortured man groans in his agony.

"I cannot give it," he says hoarsely. "This marriage cannot take place."

She turns pale and seizes the back of a chair for support.

"Cannot take place," she murmurs, doubting the evidence of her senses.

He sits with downcast eyes. He cannot look in the pained, wondering eyes. She is sorely wounded. What can this mean? She falls on her knees before him. She bursts into tears.

"You refuse to make me happy," the young

voice cries, with an accent of reproach and pain. He places his hand upon her head.

"Listen, my child. You say you love Charles Atkinson. I believe your love to be sincere. Through your love for him I ask you to cast aside all thoughts of wedding him. You ask me why? Because that wedding would be productive of naught but disgrace and shame. He comes of an old and proud family, while you—there is a blight upon your name. Ask me not to tell you. Place confidence in me and remember, I speak for your good. In after years the story of your life may be known, and then that husband would shrink in horror at the history, the memory of which causes my distress. No; it must not be."

She feels her blood turning to ice in her veins at her uncle's words.

"Disgrace and shame—disgrace and shame." She turns the words over in her brain. What can he mean? Suddenly she thinks—her life; she knows but little of it. She has a faint recollection of father, mother, very faint, like the memory of a dream. She has been told they were dead. Could it be possible that her uncle had referred to them? It must be. She knew of nothing else. She speaks to him in a whisper, so low he can scarcely hear it.

"Is the story of disgrace and shame upon my parents' names?"

He does not answer. She rises.

"It must be that," she says. "It is your duty to tell me now what it is. I am no longer a child. I

am a woman, with a woman's heart. That heart is breaking. It is better that I should know the truth; it can affect me but little more than the allusion to it that you have made. Oh! Uncle John. You have crushed my heart."

She sinks into a chair near by; she awaits his answer with a dumb feeling of anguish at her heart. He is weeping, the tears are coursing down his wrinkled cheeks. He knows that what she asks is but right; but he cannot tell her. He rises from his chair and comes to her.

"My darling; light of my old age: What you ask is impossible. If I were but to breathe the terrible story you would be stricken dead before my eyes. I feel it. You could not live under the burden of shame. Press me not. I am old and weak. I have lived for years with the knowledge I possess locked in the innermost recesses of my heart. I cannot give it up. Your sad face, saddened by me, touches my soul. I cannot bear to look upon it. Retire, my child, and pray heaven to blot out from your memory the thought of that love that cannot be gratified. Good night. Do not cast blame upon me. I am acting for the best."

He kisses her brow, and leaves her. Leaves her to cast herself upon the floor, and call upon heaven to rob her of life and memory; to remove from her heart the anguish that fills it to bursting.

CHAPTER XXXII

FILE OF OLD NEWSPAPERS

For an hour she lies upon the soft carpet. For an hour, weeping. For an hour wishing in her heart that she will never arise. Then she recovers. She rises to her feet, and brushes the waving masses of hair from her face. Ebon hair which has become unconfined as she struggles alone with her anguish. She has decided what course to pursue. She will carry it out to the bitter end, even if it robs her of reason, and breaks her heart. She has resolved to abide by her uncle's advice. He must surely know best; but she cannot face her loved one. She cannot bear the look of pain and wonder that her cruel words will bring to the loving eyes. No. She will write him. It is so much easier to write. A sudden resolve, a dash of the pen, the epistle dispatched, and all is over.

She walks to the desk, the dumb, dazed feeling at her heart making her hardly conscious of her action. She takes the lamp and sets it upon the leaf. There is no paper upon the desk, so she opens a small drawer at the top. It does not yield readily to her touch. She is obliged to exercise some little force. Ah! She is successful. The drawer comes out, but so violent has been her effort that it comes out of the desk entirely. There is plenty of writing material there. She takes out paper and envelopes, and then tries to replace the drawer. Something

seems to interfere. What is that? She puts her hand in to remove the obstacle, and finds it is the edge of a newspaper that has become fastened in the groove. She takes it out, and finds there are more of them. A vague feeling of curiosity takes possession of her soul. She is a woman. Women are ever curious. She takes out the papers, one by one. They are old ones. Sixteen years old. What is there about these papers that they should be hidden in the back of an old desk, and kept for so long? She looks over one. Why does not that uncle, who has hidden them, come and prevent her reading them?

But no. No one comes, and she unfolds the paper and stands staring at a startling headline, marked with ink. Startling, indeed, for a young, innocent girl to read.

"MARRIED TO HIS OWN MOTHER!!!"

That is what she reads.

"Married to his own mother!" She repeats the words in a whisper. Then from her heart comes a great feeling of pity for such an unfortunate one. She slowly reads the first paper through. It relates the meeting and marriage of Albert Andrews and Frances Norton. It follows out the story of their lives; tells of the horrible discovery of the relationship existing between them. She reads it through, not quite understanding it. It seems so impossible to her mind. She cannot conceive it. "Why are these papers hidden?" she asks herself. She reads

the next. It contains an account of the sickness of the wife and mother; speaks of the two little children—two little girls. Still, she cannot understand it. The next, *and the truth is known.* It speaks of her uncle, John Barton; of his arrival in America, and taking charge of the two little girls. She, Rose, is one of the two. She stares at the paper with eyes that seem to start from their sockets. It all comes to her like a flash. She understands it all now. Disgrace and shame—aye, greater than mind can conceive. She does not faint; her head is reeling; she can feel her heart throbbing violently. It would be a relief if it would cease. "Yes. Uncle John was right. The marriage could never take place. The proud, noble name of the Atkinsons shall not be stained. Oh, it is horrible." For the first time the girl weeps, since discovering the secret. She weeps, the crystal tears bedewing the musty old paper that tells her upon the night of the day of her greatest happiness, that she is not fit to associate with the world. It is not her fault; yet the Christian world will curl their haughty lips, and draw closer to them their snowy skirts, for fear of contamination. Not her fault. She is innocent; but the crime of the parents must be visited upon her head. Divine law, that one must suffer for the other. This is Christianity. But are the parents guilty? She has not finished reading; there are two more papers to read. She looks over the first. It speaks of the confinement of the bereaved woman in

the asylum, where she has spent so many years in her early life.

"Hopelessly insane," the paper says. "She will never come forth from the gloomy walls in possession of her senses."

It is her mother she reads about; she understands that; her mother, the loving mother who bore untold pain, that she should be born to live, to suffer in the years to come—and her father? She shudders. She has no father; she is illegitimate. Great God! but the thought is maddening. In one of the papers she reads of the unhappy man leaving his country behind him forever. She pities him as she reads. In the last paper she reads of the death of the mother, dying in maniacal convulsions; raving alone in her cell. She also reads of the death of kind Isaac Warden. She throws the paper from her, overcome with horror; she falls in the nearest chair. What can she do? She cannot face Charley Atkinson again. She would sink before him in her shame. Uncle John was right. It would have been better if she had never known this; but accident has revealed what the kind, old man would have kept hidden. The hours creep on. It is past midnight, and still the soft lamplight shines on the bowed head, the flowing hair, the rounded form of the girl, who sits crushed and broken within the circle of light it throws.

Suddenly she rises from her recumbent position. She has been thinking—thinking deeply. She has come to a desperate conclusion. She hurries to the

desk, and arranging the materials before her, writes —one short note, which she seals; then another. She carefully replaces the old file of newspapers, the discovery of which has changed the whole course of her life. She replaces the drawer, and leaving the two missives lying upon the open desk, she blows out the light, and noiselessly creeps up the stairs to the apartment shared alike by herself and her sister. Her sister—darling, impetuous, self-willed Lilla. The blow will be a hard one for you, child. Need she know it? Of what use will it be to wreck her young life by a knowledge of this horror? No. She shall not know it. At least from the lips of the sister who loves her. She is sleeping, as the half-crazed girl enters; sleeping, with one rounded, white arm beneath her golden head; the other is lying out upon the counterpane. She is smiling in her sleep. How soon will that smile change when she hears what the sister has to tell her! Not the secret. No—no! not that; but something else.

She does not waken her yet; she busies herself in packing into a valise several articles of clothing, plain clothing. She will not need anything beautiful. She is going where it will not be of use. Besides, she has not room in her valise. She soon finishes the preparations for departure. She arranges her hair, and dons her plainest hat; then she gently arouses the sleeping one.

A few grumbling remonstrances, and Lilla opens her eyes.

She is startled at the appearance of Rose. Rose, standing by her bedside, clad in black, which appears more sombre than ever in the faint light of the night lamp.

"Why, Rose; how you frightened me," she murmurs.

"Did I, darling? I am sorry."

"What are you doing, dressed at this time of night? Where are you going?"

"Going to leave this place forever."

Lilla sits up straight in bed at this announcement. Amazement stills her tongue for the instant; but not for long. She is a perfect woman; she cannot remain silent long.

"Forever!" she repeats. "What do you mean?"

"Lilla, dear; I have this night made discoveries that make it impossible for me to remain here longer. I am going out into the world to try and be forgotten. I have not the courage to end my life. I am too much of a Christian to think of such a thing, or I should do so. I cannot explain to you what it is I know. Perhaps in years to come you may know. I am going away, darling. I come to bid you farewell." The gentle voice breaks; she is weeping.

Lilla is thoroughly awake by this time. She cannot comprehend the meaning of her sister's words. She sits and stares blankly at her. Suddenly she says:

"And will Uncle John allow you to go?"

"He does not know it; I will be far away when he discovers it."

"And Charley?"

Fresh sobs, that rack the delicate frame.

"It is through him that I am going."

A flash of anger crosses the young girl's beautiful face

"Has he dared to insult you; dared to say or do anything that would cause you unhappiness?"

"No, dear. He is the soul of honor. He loves me. Don't ask me to explain. I cannot; my rea sons for going can be known only to myself. Kiss me, darling, my own sweet sister. I must not delay. Kiss me, and let me go."

To her surprise, the ruddy haired sister arises from her bed. She says not one word, but hastens to dress. She also puts on a plain dark costume. She has a look of determination upon her sweet, young face.

"What are you doing?" cries Rose in alarm.

Lilla turns and looks at her.

"You are going away?" she asks.

"Yes."

"You are my sister?"

"Yes." What was coming?

"I love you. You are all I have. I am going with you."

"No—no, dear. You are better off here. You have some one to love you. Your life is before you. You *shall* not sacrifice yourself."

"Rose Barton. This morning you were happy,

satisfied; with all you claim for me in your own possession. You have told me that some discovery made since that time compels you to leave behind you all this. If this discovery affects you, it concerns me, and if you go, I go with you."

She is determined.

"But Lilla—"

"I am resolved. If you refuse to allow me to share your secret you shall not refuse me the privilege of sharing your future life. If you protest, I shall arouse Uncle John and tell him all. I am going."

Rose has not expected this. After all it may be for the best. She loves her younger sister, and with her to share her lot, she will be happier. So she agrees, and a small trunk is packed in place of the valise. The clocks in the house strike two as they finish, and then, with stealthy footsteps, these two young creatures creep down the stairs, each carrying one end of the trunk. They unfasten the door in the rear of the house, and make their way to the stables. Their favorite horse neighs gently as they enter; he recognizes his young mistresses. They harness him to a light wagon, and lifting the trunk in behind them, they drive off in the early morning in the first pale rays of coming day, five miles, to the nearest station. They are acquainted with the agent. Rose tells him they are going on a visit to a friend in the city, and asks him to return the horse to their uncle. He agrees; the tickets are purchased, and in an hour they are speeding

toward the distant city of Chicago, leaving behind them loving care, luxury, and aching hearts. Before them is an unknown future, the cold, unsympathetic world, the dangers that beset the pathways of innocence.

The horse neighs his farewell as they mount the train.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE DISCOVERY OF THE FLIGHT

Charles Atkinson, Esq., was not usually an early riser. He preferred the dreamy repose of the morning to the long walks and fresh air that we are told are conducive to good health and long life. His views upon the saying regarding the early bird and the worm were not flattering to the worm, whom he looked upon as a foolish creeping thing, to be out so early to furnish a meal for the feathered enemy. But this particular morning he was out, strolling in the woods before six o'clock. Reason? Because he could not sleep. The long night had been passed in thinking of pretty Rose Barton; when he managed to doze off, her smiling face appeared to him and he found himself waking with her name upon his lips; and so, after tossing upon his bed, smoking numerous cigars, and trying every method of producing somnolency that he had ever heard of, he arose, dressed himself and was out upon the lawn by early morning. From there he strolled into the wood, and

there heard the horn blow which summoned the laboring farm hands to their early meal. He felt slightly hungry, and knowing that his own breakfast would not be ready for two hours at least, determined to partake of that meal with the laborers.

They made room for him at the well-filled table, as he entered the kitchen and expressed his determination, and he enjoyed the meal more than any he had eaten for years.

He lit a cigar and slowly walked toward the residence of John Barton, not over one half mile from his own.

"I suppose it's rather early," he muttered, as he climbed a rail fence. "But she told me she would give me her answer this morning; and I want to be there when she arises. Sweet Rose; how happy we will be."

A negro was sweeping the veranda as he walked up the gravel walk. It is our old friend, Jupiter, looking but little older than when we saw him last. Negroes seem to never grow old, and when they do, it is usually all at one time. Jupiter looked about the same as he did twenty years before. He sees and recognizes the young man, and drops his broom in amazement.

"Fo' de Lord's sake, Mister Charley; what am you doin' yeah, at dis time in de mo'nin'?"

"Why, it is nearly seven o'clock, Jup. Do you think I sleep all day?"

"Dunno, sah. You gen'ly gits 'round yeah 'bout

noon. You is too early dis mo'nin', sah. None of de folks am up yit."

"Oh, I'm in no hurry. I'll smoke awhile and wait until they arise." So he sits down upon the veranda.

"Ah! this glorious morning air is well worth an early rising to obtain."

"Don't think you gits much of it, Mister Charley," and Jupiter displays his white teeth. "Your man Jack done tole me you sleeps till nine o'clock."

"Did; eh?"

"Yes, sah."

"Jack had better mind his own business."

Lazily stretching out his legs, he smokes, watching the blue clouds as they ascend to the trees, and seeing in them Rose's sweet face.

Jupiter finishes his sweeping.

"'Scuse me, sah;" he says, drawing near, "but I must go see to de ole man's desires. He will be ringin' for his hot water soon; you kin stay yeah. I'll tell de boss you are waitin' to see him, jist as soon as he gits up."

"And Miss Rose," adds Charley.

A broad grin spread over Jupiter's face.

"Cert'inly, Miss Rose," he repeats, and then he is gone.

For an hour the young man sat and smoked. The time passed slowly to him, and seemed much longer than it really was.

"They are deucedly late risers here," he muttered,

looking at his watch. "Phew! Eight o'clock. Guess Jup forgot I was here."

So he made three strides that brought him to the door. Just as he starts to ring the bell it opens and he starts back in surprise, as he sees Jupiter's scared face before him.

"Have you seen 'em?" he cries.

"Who?" asked Charley, in wonder.

"De gals—Miss Rose and Miss Lilla."

"What are you talking about?"

"Dey is gone, Mister Charley; gone, and lef' no word."

Gone! Left no word! What could this mean?

With a cry of startled surprise the young man pushed the servant to one side, and entered the house. John Barton was sitting before the table spread for breakfast, with his white head bending in grief.

"What is this Jupiter tells me?" eagerly cried the young man.

John Barton looks up, he sees the young lover.

"Ah, Mr. Atkinson; I am glad you have come. Have you seen them? They have been to your house for an early walk, have they not? Tell me. Don't keep me in suspense!" And the old man fairly foams in his excitement and despair.

"I have not seen your nieces, sir."

John Barton turns from him with a gesture of despair.

"Jupiter tells me they are not here."

"No—no. They have gone. I went myself to the

room where they slept. I knocked. No answer. I opened the door, and found the room empty. I thought nothing of it then, for I thought they had gone out for a walk; but they did not return. They have left me. Rose has gone and taken her sister with her."

It is a pitiful sight to see this old man moaning in his agony. His wife enters the room; she tries to soothe him. Her efforts are unavailing.

To the young man this is a bitter blow. He cannot realize it. There must be some mistake.

"What reason could she have had to do as you say?" he asks the grief-stricken man before him. He does not answer. He is reproaching himself. He remembers his words of the night before.

At this moment Jupiter enters the room. His sable face is grave and worried. He has seen much trouble in this family. Is this a continuation of the fatality that has followed them? He has two letters in his hands.

"I found dese on de libr'ıy desk," he says.

The bereaved relative takes the missives.—Rose's farewell.

"One for me; one for you," he mutters, looking at the superscription. "They were written by Rose."

With trembling hands the lover tears open the envelope. He reads the written words. They are like coals of fire to his heart.

"DEAR CHARLEY: I should not call you this, for you will say my actions will not appear as though you were dear to me; but oh, heaven! I do love

you, dear. I am acting for the best, through that love. I shall ever love you, dear, although I can never wed you. Do not think me capricious. I have made discoveries that make it impossible. I am going far away. I shall never see you again. *I must not.* Do not follow me, nor attempt to find me. My mind is made up. I can never wed you. Do not ask an explanation. You can never know. Farewell forever. ROSE."

With an aching heart and dazed brain, he re-reads the words: "Farewell forever?" No. He will find her. He must know the reason for this strange conduct. The uncle has finished reading the missive addressed to him. He is bending over it, a look of horror and despair upon his face, terrible to behold. This is what he has read:

DEAR UNCLE JOHN: When you receive this I shall be far away. Your words last night crushed my heart; left me, a happy girl, a miserable woman. I could not understand you then. I know all now. I have discovered the history of my unhappy parents. You were right. A marriage between myself and Mr. Atkinson would be a lasting shame upon his fair name. Knowing what I do, I cannot face him again. I have determined to put miles between us. I am going away. You have been a kind and loving friend, a father to me; but I cannot longer remain under your roof. I must seek a home among strangers, where the story of my shame is not known. Do not follow me; you cannot find me. Do not grieve for me, it is better so.

Your broken-hearted niece, ROSE.

How he reproaches himself. How this old man near the grave, condemns his action; but he must find her. This innocent girl, unused to the ways of the world, must not be permitted to sacrifice her

young life, and the other, the sister, she is not so old. It will be worse for her.

"What are you going to do?" It is the voice of the lover.

"What does she say to you?" asks the old man.

The young man silently hands him the note. John Barton reads it. A groan bursts from his lips, as he comprehends its meaning. He silently hands the note to its owner.

"Can you explain this?" asks the lover.

"I can; but you can never know."

"Can never know? and why? She was my affianced wife. She was to have given me her answer this morning. I came for it, and find only this note. Only sorrow. She was to have asked your consent. Did she speak to you?"

"Yes."

"And you?"

"I refused to give it."

"Refused to give it!" A flush of anger reddens the young man's face.

"Why?"

John Barton turns upon him desperately.

"I cannot give you my reasons. Does not her letter say she cannot wed you? Do you not think that a reason sufficient to drive this young creature out into the world, far from love and tender care, is grave enough to cause the thought of marriage to her mind to appear as something impossible? You do not know. You never can. Do not press me."

A determined light shone from Charles Atkinson's eyes.

"I must confess that this is an unprecedented occurrence; and I refuse to be thus thrust aside unsatisfied. I believe Rose loves me, and through some action on your part has taken this step. Now, listen to me. I shall take immediate steps to find her. I shall scour this broad land. She is mine by the divine right of love. She shall be my wife. No matter what her reasons are, no matter what stands in the way, she shall be my wife."

The old man slowly rises. He looks the other in the face.

"Charles Atkinson." The voice is firm. "You are young. You are fired by your great love. Listen to me. Do not try to force that girl into a marriage, for I tell you that in years to come, if you were to discover all, you would turn from her in horror; your love would die an immediate death. I told her this last night. She could not understand it then; but in some manner she has discovered my reasons for refusing consent, and she admits I am right. She loves you. She has gone from you, lest that love should bring you sorrow—cast a blight upon your honorable name."

"And suppose I say I am willing to accept her in spite of everything; willing to take her to my heart and make her my wife?"

"You do not know—you do not know.

"Why not tell me all, and then allow me to decide?"

A look of pain and horror came to the old man's face.

"No—no," he cried. "That can never be."

The young man turned from him, with a gesture of impatience.

"So be it," he muttered in a tone of determination, and started to leave the room.

The old man steps before him.

"What are you going to do?"

"You refuse to share your confidence with me. Why should I answer you?"

"Listen to me, Charles. We are both afflicted. I love this girl and her young sister as a relative. I have seen them grow in beauty and womanhood before my eyes. You love Rose, as a lover. You are young and impetuous. It is right that I should know what you contemplate. If it is to search for them, I will assist you; yes, accompany you, do all in my power to bring my darlings back to me, your love, to you."

"And yet you refused your consent to our marriage?"

"I thought it best. She knows all now. If she, in the face of her knowledge, accepts you as her husband, then I shall not say nay."

The young man seized his hand in a hearty clasp.

"We will find her!" he cried.

"We will work together."

The door opened at this juncture, admitting Jupiter.

"De man from de depot has jist come wid de hoss an' wagin dat de gals druv to de station."

Both the men started.

"Horse and wagon!" they cried.

'Yes, sir," and the depot master entered. "The ladies left them in my care to return to you. They said they were going to visit friends in Chicago. A long visit I took it to be, for they carried a trunk."

"Did they purchase tickets to Chicago?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we will find them."

Vouchsafing no answer to the man's look of inquiry they made immediate preparation to follow the fugitives; and the next train bore John Barton, Charles Atkinson, and the faithful Jupiter toward the distant city, where the young girls had gone.

Old Mrs. Barton bade them God speed, as she stood upon the station platform; and returned to the desolate house, to await the return of her husband, and the objects of his search. "Pray heaven that they may be successful!" she murmured, as she started upon her journey home.

Pray heaven, indeed.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ALONE IN A GREAT CITY

It was not yet light when the train, bearing Rose and Lilla, rolled into the Union depot in Chicago. They had ridden all the long, warm day, and the longer night, refusing themselves the luxury of a sleeper, for fear of expending the money, of which

they had but little. They followed the passengers, and were soon standing upon the platform; then for the first time came to Rose that terrible feeling, of being a stranger in a strange land, with no place to go, no friend to appeal to for guidance. She had never been in Chicago before, and never alone in any large city; and so now, as she stands upon the nearly deserted platform, with her sister clinging to her arm, she feels indeed her helplessness, and half regrets her action.

"I have money enough to return," she murmured to herself. "Why not take the next train?" But then before her mind's eye came the face of her lover, Charles Atkinson, looking at her, with reproach in his eyes, and she drew herself together, determined that he must never see her more.

"Come, sister," she whispered, and led the way along the platform, then up the steps to the crowded lobby, then out on the street.

"Hack! carriage! hansom!" came the bedlam of voices to the young girls' ears, as the ever anxious "Jehus" thrust their long whips forward to attract the attention of some one of the hurrrying crowd, hoping to secure them as a fare. "Omnibus, Miss," and one of Parmelee's gentlemanly agents came forward. But the girls passed them, and stood a little to one side, hoping the crowd would soon pass on, and then they could inquire of some one of the hack drivers as to a quiet hotel or cheap boarding house, where they could stop until they could find some kind of employment. Rose was a skilful

embroiderer, and a neat seamstress. She made all her own under-garments, and besides, had a good idea of drawing and painting, and thought with all her accomplishments she would find it comparatively easy to obtain lucrative employment. She did not know, poor girl, that there are hundreds of experienced women in a large city, who are equally as well taught, who find it hard struggling to make both ends meet. She had this to learn.

They waited for an hour, and still the crowd remained as dense as ever. Many people find their way to the Union Depot.

"I am growing very hungry, Rose," murmured Lilla.

The words of her sister reminded her that she, too, was in need of food; but she determined to wait awhile yet, until she saw some one whose face seemed kindly, to ask for information. She dreaded to speak to any one; this timid creature, fresh from the green fields of the country. A flashily dressed young man passed them. His quick eye observed them, standing hesitatingly by the iron railing that skirts one side of the pavement. He glanced at them curiously, and then passed on. He did not proceed far, for suddenly making up his mind to something, he returned, and approaching the girls, lifted his polished silk hat and addressed them.

"Excuse me, ladies, for addressing you; but you seem strangers. Are you waiting for some one?"

Rose looked timidly up into his face. It was a dark, handsome face; eyes black and piercing, slight-

ly sinister, she thought then. A black mustache, carefully waxed and pointed at the ends, hid a mouth hard and cruel; but the smile that caused the sensual lips to part, displaying the even, white teeth, disguised the cruelty which was apparent in repose, and made him appear more kindly. A fashionably cut suit of clothing of a loud pattern gave him a prominent appearance, and the silk hat, a miracle of brightness, which he held in his hand at the moment of speaking to the girls, was of the latest shape. A huge "solitaire" blazed in his shirt front of dazzling whiteness, and another glittered from the little finger of his left hand. Somehow, a feeling of mistrust took possession of the girl's heart, as she observed the dress and general appearance of the man, and she would have turned from him with a cold reply, had not Lilla, who had evidently been impressed by his glittering appearance, answered his question.

"No, sir," she replied, in her sweet, girlish voice. "We are strangers here."

"Ah, strangers!" and a look of sudden interest came to the black eyes.

"Yes," continued Lilla. "We were waiting to see if some one could not direct us to a hotel or lodging house."

"Lilla," cried Rose, remonstrating.

"You need not fear to make me your confidant, Miss," the stranger said quickly, addressing Rose. "In fact, it is a good thing for you that I happened to be passing and spoke to you. I can be of great

assistance to you. I can direct you to the very place you wish to go, providing, of course, you desire it."

"This is very kind of you," cried Lilla. "I am sure we appreciate your offer; don't we, Rose?"

"The gentleman is very kind," answered Rose. hesitatingly. She does not feel easy in her mind.

The stranger observed it. With an easy movement he drew from his pocket a card case.

"Pardon me for not introducing myself," he cried.

"I felt so interested in you that I forgot myself," and he proffered a card to Rose.

She glanced at it.

"T. Smith Chatwood," was the name it bore.

"I am an agent for the working girls' home," he announced. "Of course you know in all the large cities there are hundreds of young girls, intelligent and gifted, who find it hard to make an honest living and even if they are successful, they are obliged to pay exorbitant prices for board and lodging. So, a few years ago, a number of good people formed themselves into a company and established a home, where girls can obtain good board and have all the comforts of a home; and besides, possess the advantage of intercourse among persons of refinement, among whom they stand a better chance of obtaining well paying employment.

"There are a number of agents who frequent the various railroad depots, on the lookout for young girls who have come to the city for the first time, and whose duty it is to try and induce them to put

themselves under the protection of the institution. I am one of these agents. I am not compelled to work, as my income is large, and sufficient for my desires; but I use my leisure moments in trying to further the interests of this commendable undertaking; in trying to help along in the good work."

His words, smoothly spoken, quieted the fears which had found lodging in Rose's heart, and she looked up into his face with a grateful smile. This is just what she wants—some quiet place where she can stay until she can find employment.

"Now, if you desire, I will escort you to a nice, quiet restaurant where you can breakfast, and then conduct you to the home. What say you?" and the agent for the working girls' "home," beams upon them.

"I think that is best," murmured Rose; "and Oh, how can we ever thank you?"

"Don't mention it," answers this good (?) man.

A hack is called; the girls enter it, and after a few words of direction to the driver from the new found friend, they are whirled away.

"Oh! I forgot my trunk," suddenly cried Rose.

"Have you the check?"

"Yes. Here it is."

"Give it to me. I will have your trunk brought to the 'Home.'" Without a feeling of doubt, the girl gave him her check, and he carefully placed it in his pocket-book. They breakfasted in a quiet, unassuming restaurant, the stranger insisting upon paying for it, despite the remonstrance of Rose.

"The company allows me the money," he assured her, and she felt doubly grateful to this the agent of such a charitable institution. After making a good meal, they re-entered the hack, and were driven in the direction of the "Home;" so said Mr. Chatwood. It was fully nine o'clock when the hack stopped before a large, imposing building, of brown stone.

"Here we are," cheerfully cried Mr. Chatwood, and he leaped out, assisting the girls after. Rose noticed that several passers-by glanced at them curiously, as they ascended the wide stone steps; but thought nothing of it at that time.

Their conductor rang the bell, and seemed impatient that it was not answered at once.

"Guess they're all asleep," he muttered, giving the bell knob another impatient jerk.

A slight feeling of wonder came to the girl's mind at his words. It seemed strange to her that the residents of a home for working girls should be asleep at nine o'clock in the morning. Further thought was interrupted by the opening of the door by a negro servant in shabby livery. He seemed surprised at the appearance of the two girls and their escort, but said nothing, and admitted them.

"Where is the madame?" Rose heard their friend say to the servant.

"Big night, last night, sir. She is in bed."

What could this strange answer mean? They were conducted into a large, magnificently furnished parlor. The room was in semi-darkness; but Rose could see that the furniture was of the most costly

"PARDON ME FOR NOT INTRODUCING MYSELF."–Page 254

kind, and the walls were covered with oil paintings, some of them of a style that she had never seen before, representing subjects hardly proper for young working girls to contemplate.

Again that vague feeling of mistrust crept over her.

Lilla had been looking about the apartment, and seemed delighted at what she saw. Suddenly, with a cry of pleasure, she darted to the corner of the room. She had spied a piano, and without asking, or even stopping to think whether it was proper or not, she threw open the lid and rattled off a brilliant waltz.

"Don't do that, sister," cried Rose. "They might not like it."

"Let her enjoy herself," said a soft voice behind her, and a lady, (she looked such,) with grey hair arranged in the latest fashion, enveloped in a silk wrapper, came toward her.

"Welcome to our home," she continued, in her melodious voice, with a pleasant smile irradiating her countenance, putting an arm about the girl's waist. "Mr. Chatwood has informed me that you are strangers in Chicago;" and she led the way to a soft lounge.

"We are, Madame; strangers without friends."

"We must see that you find friends," replied the evident manager of this institution which provided oil paintings and pianos for poor working girls.

Lilla had risen from the instrument upon the entrance of the other. She now came toward her.

"What a beautiful girl!" the woman exclaimed. "Are you sisters?"

"Yes, Madam," answered Rose.

"Come to me, dear." Lilla drew near.

"Sit down beside me. Kiss me, dear. We must be great friends," and Lilla nestled close to the voluptuous bosom of this lady,(?) apparently so kind.

'Have you come far?" she suddenly asked.

"Many miles. We are very tired."

"Then you must retire. Come. I will show you to your apartments, and we can have a long talk when you arise."

"But what terms—" began Rose.

"Never mind that. We will arrange everything after you have rested. Come;" and she led the way out of the parlor and up the broad staircase to the rooms above. They were ushered into a large chamber, furnished upon the same scale of magnificence as the room below, and after kissing them both, this kind (?) patroness left them.

With widely distended eyes Rose gazed about her. The carpet upon the floor was of soft velvet; the furniture of the richest kind; lace curtains hung at the windows, and everywhere was the evidence of wealth; not refinement, for the engravings and paintings were of a lewd character, and their appearance oppressed the delicate refined girl.

Lilla had seemed to accept it all as a matter of course, and was disrobing as fast as she could, so Rose, with a sigh, prepared to follow her example, and soon both of these innocent ones were sleep-

ing soundly, while below, Mr. T. Smith Chatwood conversed earnestly with the lady of the grey hair, and, to judge from his actions, was highly pleased with his good, Christian work of the morning.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE HOME FOR WORKING GIRLS

A gentle tap upon the door aroused Rose from her profound slumber. At first she thought she was in her little room in her uncle's house; but a glance at the surroundings soon undeceived her. A heavy feeling at her heart made her feel as though a good cry would do her good; but she had no time to indulge in this truly womanly weakness, fcr the knock was repeated with emphasis this time.

She slipped on her dress and went to the door. It was the servant who had admitted them in the morning.

"You' dinnah is ready," he said gruffly, as she opened the door.

"Very well," she answered. "I will be ready soon. Will you kindly send the matron to me?"

"De what?" cried the man, with a broad smile.

"The lady of the house."

"Oh, de madame. Dunno whether she kin come or not; little party in the blue parlor. But I'll see," and he hurried away.

Little party in the blue parlor! What kind of place is this? She looked at her watch, a present

from kind Uncle John. It was nearly five o'clock.

"Little party in the blue parlor," she murmurs. "At five in the afternoon." She cannot understand this.

Going to the bed, she aroused Lilla with a kiss, and soon they were dressed for dinner. Their clothing seemed very plain to them. They had been accustomed to dressing for dinner in something nice and cool and much more elegant. Their friend of the morning—she of the silk wrapper and grey hair, entered the room as they finished dressing.

"You sent for me," she said in her soft tone. "I hope you are refreshed by your sleep," she added, kissing Lilla's beautiful face.

"*I* sent for you," answered Rose. "I wished to speak to you about our trunk. I gave the check to Mr. Chatwood."

"It came some time ago. It is in the hall below. I will have it brought to your room, while you are at dinner."

"But we have not made any arrangements as yet."

"Never mind that. Remain here to-night and see how you like your home," and she smiled covertly; "and when you see it as it is, we will speak of those things. Are you ready?"

With a feeling of doubt, for this lady was too kind to an entire stranger, Rose answered that they were ready, and followed their conductress to the dining room.

She drew back in surprise as she entered, and in-

voluntarily clasped her sister about the waist, with one arm, as if to protect her.

The room was a large one, and gathered about the long table, which was literally covered with eatables, silver plate and china, were a score of women; some young, some older, all with an expression of weariness upon their faces; richly, but carelessly, dressed. Diamonds flashed from the fingers and ears of nearly all. They were eating as the girls entered, and loudly discussing various topics, which seemed strangely out of place at the table. Everything: garments, jewelry, all seemed to Rose as entirely unbefitting inmates of a home for working girls, who stopped there merely from motives of economy, and the desire to have a comfortable home. It was decidedly comfortable —in fact, elegant; but it seemed strange to Rose that these women, supposed to work for their livelihood, should be robed in such garments, and be partaking of dinner at five o'clock.

"Mr. Chatwood must have misrepresented matters to me," she thought. "I shall never be able to pay the price of board at this place."

"Be silent, girls," commanded the one who seemed to rule, their conductress; "and allow me to introduce you to the new arrival from the country, Miss Rose and Miss Lilla." They had given their true names inadvertently.

"This is Miss Maud, Miss Gertie, Miss Birdie, Miss Cora," and so on around the table.

The "working" girls acknowledged the introduc-

tion in a careless, heedless manner, and then continued their dinner and discussion.

"Isn't the blonde beautiful?" Rose heard one of the party remark in an audible whisper to another.

"Wonder if it's natural," said another.

To the gentle mind of Rose there was something terrible in the loud talk, and frequent expressions of slang that she heard; and she ate her dinner in silence, determined to leave this place at once.

"This will never do for Lilla," she shuddered.

The meal was finished and the two girls were once more conducted to their room. They found their trunk had been brought there during their absence, and further, upon the bed lay two dresses of satin and lace.

"Some one has made a mistake," cried Rose. "Those do not belong to us."

Lilla had picked one up, and was admiring it with childish eagerness.

"Is it not beautiful?" she cried.

"Do you think so, dear?" sounded a soft voice behind them; that of the "matron" as Rose had termed her. "You must pardon me," she cried effusively, advancing to the bed. "We are going to have a reception to-night, and thinking perhaps you would like to join in the gaieties, and might not have suitable clothing, I took the liberty of supplying you. You will not take offense, I hope?"

"You are too kind," cried Lilla. "We will be pleased to join in the reception."

"I thought so," purred the kind (?) one.

"But Lilla, we must be out in the morning to seek employment. We must retire early," remonstrated Rose. She dreaded this "reception."

"Now, Rose; don't be hateful," cried Lilla. "It won't hurt us to enjoy ourselves a little."

"No. Your sister is right. Youth is the time for pleasure. Make yourselves happy. We are all happy here."

Rose doubted this somewhat. The wearied faces at the table had not seemed happy.

"You will go; won't you Rose, please?" and Lilla placed her arm about her sister's neck.

"Well, if it will please you, dear," she answered. Why should she try to deprive this young creature of enjoyment? It all seemed so strange to her; an inmate of the house but a few hours, and yet everything prepared for their pleasure. Everything to make them at home.

"But what will it cost in the end?" she thought.

Better not think of that, my poor, deluded girl. The cost will be greater than you anticipate. She who had been termed the madame first by Mr. Chatwood, again by the servant, assisted Lilla to dress. She seemed greatly attracted by the girl's fresh, young beauty, and took great pains to make her as attractive as possible. Rose silently robed herself in the costly dress, and found to her horror that, although it was strictly what is known as evening dress, it was rather more of an "undress" than she had ever worn before; being cut decidedly low, ex-

posing the arms and shoulders much more than her refined nature thought proper.

"I hardly care to appear before strangers in this costume," she said doubtfully to the "madame," who by this time was putting the finishing touches to Lilla's toilet.

"And why not, dear?"

"It seems rather bold; it exposes my arms and—" she hesitated.

The woman laughed.

"That is fashionable," she cried. "You will find all the ladies dressed in the same manner."

"I would prefer a lace shawl, or something to wrap about me."

"And conceal those magnificent arms, and shoulders? That would be cruel. Do not think of such a thing. Probably you are not accustomed to the ways of the fashionable world. All our great ladies dress in the same manner. See how beautiful your sister looks."

With a sigh Rose gazed upon beautiful Lilla. Yes; she was indeed beautiful. The dress showed forth her beauty to great advantage. Rather more than the simple girl liked; but the lady was so kind, and seemed to consider it good taste, and the fashionable world all dressed in the same manner; and so, not without some qualms of conscience, she accepted it as proper, and was soon ready to form a part of the "reception."

It was now nearly eight o'clock, and numerous rings at the door bell announced that the guests

must be arriving; so the lady of the house, herself not being ready as yet, left them, telling them that she would return for them soon.

The door had no sooner closed upon her than Rose clasped her sister about the neck.

"We must not remain here, dear," she cried. "I have a feeling as if something horrible were going to happen. All this elegance is not befitting a simple home for working girls. We must find some other place."

The young girl looked at her in innocent surprise.

"Why, Rose, I think it a very nice place. I am sure the lady is very kind to try and make us feel at home. You are homesick."

Ah! perhaps that was it. Homesick; that must be it; and Oh, how the sad young heart yearned for that peaceful home beside the rippling lake! How she longed for the sight of Uncle John's aged, kindly face; her aunt's motherly counsel, and good night kiss! How her heart ached for that lover, whom she had determined she must never see again! All: everything she had left came vividly to her mind, as she stood robed in satin and lace, with the yellow light of the gas shining upon her polished arms and shoulders, waiting to be conducted to an assemblage of people she dreaded to meet; to mix and associate with women she felt were not what she had been told. In her misery she wept.

"Why do you cry?" her sister's voice.

"Oh, Lilla; I miss the old home so much. Is not your heart heavy?"

"Why, of course I miss the old home; but we have left it, Rose. We must make the most of our situation. I think we will be happy here. If you feel so badly, why did you not think before you left it? If you love the old home why did you leave it?"

"My God; why did I leave it?" and then the memory of her discovery came to her, and she choked the flowing tears, determined to live as she had started, away from all who knew her. The words of Lilla caused her heart to sink. They were careless and cold. Her heart was not as tender as her own. She was better fitted to battle with the world. She did not regret leaving behind her all that was dear. She looked forward only to a new life of gaiety, and forgetfulness. She sighed as this came to her. Sighed that her darling sister was not as she; was indifferent to what the future might bring.

We are not all alike in this world; mankind is constituted peculiarly at variance one with the other. Some are loving and tender; others harsh and cruel. Misfortune bows down some to the earth, leaving them crushed forever, never to rise again; others, like the "Phoenix," arise from the ashes of their destruction, and soar again above all.

It is well that we are not all alike.

Divine Providence is wise.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE RECEPTION

Loud laughter, boisterous exclamations, the sound of some one banging on the piano, came floating up the stairs to the room where the two girls stood waiting.

Then some one began to sing; that is, made an attempt which was a decided failure, as far as music was concerned, and at that moment the lady of the house entered, and offered to escort them downstairs. She was dressed in most magnificent style, her dress being decidedly "decollette." From every finger flashed sparkling diamonds, the same precious gems forming a tiara for her hair and jewels for her ears.

A burst of admiration from Lilla as she entered, and a sickening feeling of surprise in Rose's heart.

"Now, dears, we are all ready. Don't feel shy and backward; enjoy yourselves and remember this is 'Liberty Hall.' You can do as you please."

This she added significantly. Fresh mystery for Rose.

A tap on the door. "Entrez," in French.

One of the "working girls," dressed in shimmering satin, also fashionably cut.

"Well, Maud," rather sternly. "You knew I was engaged."

"Yes, Madame; but I wished to see you—very important.'"

A whispered conversation.

"Not much politeness," thought Rose.

"Ah," the lady says. "I am glad you told me. He is very particular. Thank you, Maud. I will be down at once," and Maud left the room, carelessly humming the fragment of a popular song.

"I am *so* glad, my dears," murmurs their patroness, turning to the girls. "I have just been informed that General Markham and a particular friend have just arrived. They are both such nice gentlemen, they will be pleased to meet you, and I know you will like them. The general is getting along in years somewhat, but he is so kind, and fatherly. He will look out for you this evening. I will introduce you. I am so glad he has come;" and she puts a few deft finishing touches to Lilla's toilet.

Rose feels slightly easier in her mind to hear that a distinguished gentleman, a general in the army, probably retired, will be her escort. Relieved because he is "getting along in years." He will be kind and fatherly to her, she thinks. She dreads meeting any young man; so she clasps her sister about the waist and follows the lady down stairs. The noise and confusion becomes more apparent as they draw nearer the parlor, and as they pass the large folding doors two young men, dressed in the height of fashion, suddenly throw them open and burst into the hall. Their faces are flushed, and the uncertainty of their movements indicates that they have been drinking.

"Hello! new girls!" they cry, seeing Rose and Lilla.

"Mr. Mortimer, I am surprised!" and the mistress draws herself haughtily erect.

"S'prised? What 'bout. Been drinkin' little—thatsh all. No 'fence, Madame," and he steadies himself by holding on to the door knob, staring at the girls' fresh young faces as he does so.

His tainted breath causes Rose to draw back in horror.

"Mr. Mortimer, you will oblige me by returning to the parlor. These ladies are not accustomed to such scenes."

The fellow looks up; a leering expression of surprise upon his flushed face; then he bursts into maudlin laughter.

"Ladies! Ha! ha! Thatsh good. Hey, Gus. Ladies! How long have they been called so? Pretty good that;" and he clasps the arm of his companion who has been looking on the scene with drunken gravity, and rolls into the parlor.

"Great heaven!" cried the innocent girl, sinking upon the steps. "What kind of place is this? Where have I been brought?" and the tears flowed from her eyes.

"Never mind him, my dear," sounds the soft voice in her ear. "Mr. Mortimer forgot himself. He meant no offense. He is an intimate friend of one of the ladies. He is a nice fellow; but he drinks a little."

She remembers the insulting words and rude

laugh of the drunken man. "Ladies! How long have they been called so?" The flushed face and tainted breath come to her vividly. "An intimate friend of one of the ladies!" and do they tolerate such behavior here, in a respectable house? Her heart sinks with uncontrollable dread and fear. She would fly at once, taking her beautiful sister with her; but she cannot do so in her present garb.

"Come, dear, the general is waiting." Ah! the general. He must be a gentleman, at least. Perhaps the young man is tolerated because he is of a good family or well known. There are plenty of good families who have wayward sons. "Good boys; but they drink a little." So she rises and follows the "Madame" to where "General Markham and an intimate friend" are waiting. They pause at the polished door of an apartment at the further end of the hall. Sounds of merriment proceed from within.

"Wait here one moment," says their conductress, and they are left alone together.

"That drunken man frightened me," whispered Lilla, in a low tone.

"Let us leave this place," cried Rose; and Lilla would have done so at the moment; but just then the smiling face of the woman appeared in the door way.

"The general is eager for an introduction," she cried, and the next moment they are in the room.

It is the blue parlor; the furniture, walls, curtains, all being of that color. The gas burners are

shaded by blue glass globes, and cast a subdued light upon the surroundings. A small marble topped table occupies the centre of the room, an upright piano, the corner.

"General Markham: this is Miss Lilla; Mr. Whitcombe, Miss Rose."

"Delighted to make your acquaintance," murmurs Mr. Whitcombe, a pale blonde, wearing one eye glass.

"Glad to see you!" shouts the general; and before they are aware, the two girls are separated, each being appropriated by the gentleman (?) she has been introduced to.

General Markham is getting along in years, truly; but alas for the fatherly interest Rose expects. She sees the short, stubby form, clad in clothing much more befitting a much younger man; a shock of iron grey hair, surmounting a vulgar red face; a short, grizzly mustache, bending low over her sweet sister; and the small greenish-grey eyes gloating upon her exposed beauty, and her heart sinks. Not much fatherly interest in that gaze; rather that of the wild beast about to pounce upon its helpless prey.

She hears the murmur of her companion's voice; she does not heed it. She thinks only of Lilla—her darling Lilla, in conversation with such a man.

"'Pon honor, Miss Rose, I have been talking to you for five minutes, and you have not answered me." It is her companion.

"Excuse me, sir. I was—"

"Looking at the general, as though you contemplated eating him," interrupts Mr. Whitcombe, adjusting his eye glass. "Better look out, General. My lady friend is looking terribly at you."

"Eh, what? Oh, I was not noticing you, Whitcombe; too busy with Miss Lilla. Pretty name, eh? Mighty pretty girl. She tells me she can sing and play."

The "Madame" has left the room. They are alone with these two men. The frightened sister arises from the sofa and goes to Lilla.

"Come, dear; we had better retire." Her voice is soft and pleading.

"Retire! Well, that's rich," and the general laughs heartily. "And just as the lady is going to favor us with a song! No—no. That will never do. You will sing for us; won't you?"

"We had better retire," insists Rose. She fears these men.

"I promised the gentleman I would play," replies Lilla, hesitatingly.

"Yes. So she did. She promised me, you know," and the general looks aggrieved. So, with a sigh, Rose resumed her seat, and Lilla sat down to the piano.

Her rich, young voice filled the apartment, and at the conclusion of the song both of the men applauded heartily.

"Best I ever heard," shouted the general. "Worth a bottle of wine."

"We do not drink wine," cried Rose in alarm. "Come, Lilla; we must go now."

"Well, if you ain't the greatest girl I ever saw," cried Mr. Whitcombe. "You havn't been here ten minutes, and now you want to leave us. Your friend is not so anxious."

"She is my sister, sir."

"Oh, sister, eh? Well, she is much more obliging than you. Come, sit down and talk to me," and he attempted to force her back into her seat.

A red flush of anger came to the face of the girl.

"You are no gentleman," she cried. "Do not place your hands upon me. Come, Lilla, we must go."

"Oh, let us remain awhile yet, I don't wish to go," cries Lilla, who has been listening to the flattery poured into her ear by the general; and she likes it. Flattery is sweet to her ears.

"Yes; stay awhile and be sensible," repeats Mr. Whitcombe.

"I will go and find the lady of the house, and inform her. I shall leave here at once;" and Rose, pale and determined, goes to the door. She is alarmed at Lilla's obstinacy. She fears all is not right, and she has made up her mind to find the lady, who has been so kind, and tell her that she thinks it best to leave the general and his friend, and retire for the night. She will leave this house in the morning.

The general winks significantly at his friend.

"I will assist you to find her," cries that worthy, springing after her. "It shall never be said that Harry Whitcombe ever allowed a lady to suffer, and did not try to assist her. I can see, Miss, that your sister's refusal pains you, and we will find the "Madame" and tell her all."

His words sounded kindly to Rose, and she left the room in his company.

They had some difficulty in finding the object of their search, although Mr. Whitcombe seemed zealous in his endeavors.

"She is evidently busy," he said, coming to her upon the veranda, which extended around the back of the house; "sit down and rest awhile; really, you look faint and worried. Won't you partake of some refreshments?"

"A glass of water, if you please," she murmured. She almost forgave his former rudeness, he seemed so kind now.

He was a long time bringing the water. Sitting upon the rustic seat upon the veranda, Rose could hear the sounds of revelry within. It grated upon her sensitive nature.

"I must return to Lilla," she murmured; but at this moment Mr. Whitcombe returned with a tray and a bottle of some colored liquid, together with a glass.

"The water is not very good here, Miss Rose, so I took the liberty of bringing you a bottle of soda. It is harmless and refreshing," he added, popping the cork and filling the glass.

She accepted it. It tasted sweet and cool, and so she drained the glass.

"I must return to my sister," she said as she handed him the empty glass. "As we cannot find the lady in charge, I will insist upon her accompanying me." She tries to rise; but *finds her limbs powerless. They are numb. There is no feeling in them.* She gasps in horror, and as she feels her head begin to swim, she sees the smiling, cruel face of Whitcombe bending over her; feels his breath upon her face; knows that he is pressing his lips to her own, and she is powerless to prevent it.

She tries to cry aloud; but her voice fails her. She is sinking into unconsciousness. She hears the sound of approaching footsteps, and as she becomes oblivious to her surroundings, hears a voice that sounds familiar, say sternly:

"I do not tolerate actions of this kind in my house. I thought you were a gentleman, Mr. Whitcombe." And she knows no more.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A HORRIBLE DISCOVERY

When Rose came to herself, she was lying upon the bed in her apartment, with the face of the lady of the house bending over her.

She struggled to an upright position; her mind dazed and bewildered. For the instant she could not remember what had happened. Suddenly, like a wave, all came to her, and she wept bitterly.

"You are better, dear;" and the soft voice sounded anxiously in her ear.

"Yes; but my sister?"

"She is all right. She is enjoying herself below."

Enjoying herself in the society of a man old enough to be her father, without one thought of her sister, caring naught for her. It was maddening. She arose from the bed.

"How did you come to leave her?"

Rose told her all: That she thought the society of the two gentlemen not proper, and wished to retire; that Lilla would not do so; that she had been searching for her; of the glass of soda.

"You probably fainted from want of rest, and anxiety," murmured the "Madame." "Mr. Whitcombe summoned me to your assistance."

Rose knew this to be a lie. She remembered the words she had heard before becoming unconscious. Why should this woman lie, and deliberately?

She grew more and more alarmed.

"I must go to her," she cried.

"Certainly; although I think she will hardly thank you for interrupting her enjoyment."

Could this be true? Could her sweet sister, innocent, childish, enjoy the associations of this place?

"I will go to her at any rate," she cried; and without waiting to hear further, she opened the door and hurried down stairs. It was now nearly midnight; but the sounds of gaiety were even greater than they had been before. She hurried past the parlor doors, on to the small polished entrance to

the blue parlor. Hark! what is that? Music. Some one singing a song which, when last she heard it, had been sung in the little parlor in Uncle John's peaceful home. It sounded out of place here. It was her sister's voice; but changed. What could cause this change? She turned the knob; she entered the room, and her heart nearly ceased to beat, as she witnessed the sight before her. Upon the table, empty champagne bottles, half-emptied glasses. At the piano, Lilla, her beautiful hair unconfined, flowing to her waist, and by her side the general, his red face more flushed than ever, his little eyes dancing from the effects of the wine. She grasped the back of a chair for support. Could this be possible? Was her darling crazed? Had she forgotten all claim to modesty?

"Lilla! Lilla!" she cried in tone of anguish.

"The general turned; the piano ceased, and with it the sweet voice.

"Ah, come back, hey?" mumbled the officer. "What do you want?"

"Lilla," repeated the heart-broken sister.

The young girl turned; her face flushed, her eyes dreamy and uncertain.

"What is it, Rose?" she answered dreamily.

Then the horrible truth flashed through her mind. She knew it all now, and she felt her blood turning to ice in her veins.

Her darling sister had been tempted to drink of the wine from the bottle on the table, and she was under its powerful influence!

My God! Who can picture the anguish of the half crazed sister? She stood like one entranced, gazing with horror-stricken eyes upon the sight; and then, with a wild cry, she sprang forward, throwing the general to one side, and forced Lilla from the piano.

"Come," she cried. "Come, sister. I demand it. You shall leave this house at once!" and then with sudden recollection, "Oh, God, the sins of the parents! Cursed in your infancy! It is but being visited upon you. Oh, father; Oh, my mother!" and the hot tears filled the beautiful, suffering eyes.

The weak, unfortunate sister rose with difficulty.

"You hurt me," she cried. "You should not blame me; you brought me here."

Merciful heaven! It was true. She had been the cause of her coming. She was responsible for her sister's actions. To her mind came the thought: "I urged her to remain behind. I did not wish her to come."

The words of Cain of old: "I am not my brother's keeper."

But to her heart came the thought: "Your action has produced this."

She assisted the girl to the door, just as it opened, admitting the "Madame" and a score of her followers, among them Mr. T. Smith Chatwood, whose black eyes surveyed the scene.

"What is the matter?" the smooth voice of the "Madame."

The half-crazed sister faces her; her large indig-

nant eyes flash their rays of righteous wrath upon her.

"Matter? Look! see! Is not this enough ? My innocent sister, my darling, reeling from the effects of drink. Your wine, woman; your wine. Can you look upon this scene without reproach? Can you gaze calmly on my misery? Can you see a precious soul cast away, without a change of countenance?"

All are silent. Not one of that hardened guilty throng can reply to the girl's words.

Suddenly Mr. T. Smith Chatwood mumbles:

"It's all right. Guess she drank the wine willingly enough. Nothing to make a fuss about."

She turns on him. She has not noticed him before; but she recognizes him now, and he shrinks from the weak girl—strong man, hardened wretch that he is. He shrinks from the depths of misery and scorn displayed in the flashing eyes.

"So *you* are here? You come to gloat over your work. Wretch! scoundrel! villain!! You, the gentleman of means, the Christian agent for a house for working girls! Working girls? These shameless creatures do naught but devil's work. Your work is black and corrupt like your soul.

"Can you sleep at night after engaging in such hellish employment? I should think you would dread the coming of day, black bird of evil. See what you have done; witness your work. Were you well paid?"

He does not reply. He cannot. She continues:

"Listen all. There may be some one among you

whose heart is not all bad. To such a one I appeal. We came to this city but this morning, two innocent girls from the country. While waiting upon the sidewalk for some one to direct us to a suitable place to lodge, this black scoundrel saw us. His evil eye detected that we were strangers He approached us and stated that he represented a home for working girls, established by Christian people, for a noble cause. We believed him. He seemed a gentleman, and we allowed ourselves to be guided by him. He brought us here. God knows his object. He brought us here. Witness the result. Is there any punishment sufficiently great for such as he? No, I think not. Heaven alone can punish him. We must leave this place. I dread to think of its fearful character. Even now I am in ignorance. Is there not one gentleman among all of these I see before me? Is there not one true man who will lend his aid to direct us aright? We cannot stay here longer. The very air of this place is contaminated. Come. I am waiting."

From out of the throng steps a young man, noble in manner, with the light of sympathy shining from his eyes.

"Allow me, Miss," he cries. "I will guide you to a suitable place for the night at least."

"Can I trust you?" The girl looks him straight in the eye.

"I have a mother and sisters," he answers. "As God is my judge, you can."

She believes him.

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"Then let us hasten."

He offers his arm. Poor Lilla. She is hardly conscious of what is taking place. She looks upon it all with a silly smile.

"It is now past midnight. The rules of my house do not permit of any female passing its doors after that hour." The mistress speaks.

She reckons without her host. The young man turns on her.

"Then, Madame, for once your rules will be broken. I think you will find it for the best to say but little. There is law in Chicago."

Mr. Chatwood comes forward. "Law or no law, we can't suffer our business to be interfered with."

"No?" very quietly. "No," harshly. "I think you had better consider."

"We don't need any dictation from you. No matter who you are."

"Come, Miss." The stranger endeavors to force his way through.

"You heard what I said?" and Chatwood intercepts him.

"Stand out of my way," quietly.

"I'll see you in h—l first." A quick movement, and upon the stranger's lapel shines an ornament of peculiar style. A small gold star, enclosed in a circle, and the words: "Pinkerton Detective," gleams in Mr. Chatwood's eyes. He falls back.

"I thought you would allow me to pass," remarked the stranger, and he made his way through the throng.

The sight of that small ornament caused a chill to run through all those who saw it. They knew its power. Carefully, tenderly, Rose assisted her sister up the stairs to the room above. The hateful garments were soon removed and once more they donned the costume they had worn from home. Then they hastened to where the stranger was awaiting them. A hack stood at the door. He had called it while awaiting their coming. The driver carried the little trunk down the stairs and lifted it upon the box, and then, as the clocks struck two, they were driven rapidly away. None of the inmates or guests were to be seen as they left the house. They thought it best to keep secluded.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ALAS FOR THE RARITY OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

The wheels sounded heavy and dead as the carriage rolled along. Lilla had fallen asleep and her deep regular breathing signified that she was sleeping soundly.

The young stranger sat silent and thoughtful on the opposite seat.

He was indeed thinking deeply.

Rose, also occupied with her own thoughts, thoughts of remorse and bitter sorrow, said nothing; and so they proceeded for nearly thirty minutes.

Suddenly the stranger broke the silence:

"You were not aware of the character of the house you have just left?"

"I had not the faintest suspicion that it was not as represented to me."

"It is well that you have left it. It is one of the largest and most notorious bagnios in the city, kept by Madame Ducrow, a woman whose heart is as cold as ice and as hard as the jewels she delights to wear. Purchased by the shame of hundreds of young girls."

A noted bagnio? Great heaven, from what had they escaped? Could it be possible that such places were tolerated by a righteous government in a Christian land? And yet even he, who condemned them, frequented them. He could not be wholly pure.

The young man evidently read her thoughts, for he said:

"You are doubtless surprised that I, knowing the place, should be found there. I will explain. My name is William Blackstone. I am a detective. My business calls me everywhere. I had business at Madame Ducrow's to-night. It is well for you that I was there."

A detective! She had heard of them before. Principally from works of fiction, where they were represented as men of indomitable courage, and supernatural wisdom. She breathed freer as she heard his explanation. She felt she could trust him, for she had read that these men were ever the friends of innocent unprotected girls. But then there came another thought. Her uncle would prob-

ably try to find her, and as it would be an easy matter to trace her to Chicago, he would probably put her case into the hands of the detectives, and endeavor to find her in that manner.

This would never do. She must conceal her name from this new found friend. She must find lodgings apart from those he had promised to secure. She must not allow him to know of her whereabouts.

Filled with these thoughts the journey seemed short, and when the carriage stopped, it appeared to her as though they had gone but a short distance.

They were standing before the entrance to a small hotel. The detective leaped out, and assisted the girls, Rose arousing her sister, who looked about her in surprise.

They mounted a flight of carpeted stairs and found themselves in a cozily furnished parlor, feebly illuminated by a flickering gas jet. The new friend had left them, after showing them to the parlor, but in a few moments returned with a sleepy looking individual, with a bald head and small side whiskers.

"These are my friends, Mr. Wilcox. Make them as comfortable as you can for the night. We will see what arrangements can be made in the morning."

Mr. Wilcox bowed and smirked, and bade the ladies follow him.

"I shall return in the morning," whispered the detective. "I wish to have a conversation with you. You will find this a very nice hotel. Make your-

selves as easy as you can. Good night." And he was gone.

Along a dimly lighted corridor Rose followed the little man, with the bald head, then up a flight of stairs to another hall and then, with some little difficulty Mr. Wilcox turned the key in a door which bore the number 27, in large black figures, upon one of its panels, and, entering, lit the gas and ushered them in with another smile and smirk.

"Breakfast until 9:30," he announced, and then left them.

Rose had been obliged to support her sister to the room. She was so drowsy that she could scarcely walk, and now that they were alone she allowed her to fall upon the bed, where she soon slept soundly. Oh, what a relief to be safe from harm once more! What a blessing to find shelter beneath a respectable roof again! The girl's heart was aching, throbbing dully in her breast, but before she retired to rest she sank on her knees by the bedside and offered up a prayer to God to guide her aright, and grateful thanks that it had been no worse. She had her sister with her. Before she slept, the detective's parting words came to her. He desired a conversation. He wished to become informed as to their visit to Chicago.

"That is it," thinks the girl, and she falls asleep thinking how she can avoid this conversation until she can find other lodgings unknown to him.

She sleeps soundly. Dreams do not visit her,

and as the clocks sound out the hour of nine she awakes and is soon making her toilet.

The room is scantily furnished—simply a bed of the three-quarter size, a wash stand, bureau, towel-rack, and three chairs to match. One of those sets which furniture dealers advertise as *so* necessary for young married couples and *so* cheap. Still, the room is more cheerful to the mind of the young girl than all the magnificence of the one she has left.

An involuntary shudder creeps over her, as she thinks of it, and again she thanks the Father above that they are safe.

"Sister." It is the voice of Lilla from the bed.

"Yes, dear," hurrying to her.

"My head aches so, and I am so thirsty."

Poor child. The certain accompaniments of an over free indulgence in spirituous liquors.

Rose hastens to the water pitcher. The contents are warm—not fit to drink. A round, white knob in the wall attracts her attention. There is a card tacked below it and upon it she reads:

"Press once for water; twice for ice water; three times for porter; four times for chambermaid; five times for clerk."

She has never stopped in a hotel before; so she hardly understands the working of the electric annunciator; but she presses the knob twice, and soon the hurrying steps of some one are heard in the hall outside, and the next moment a knock on the door.

"Ice water, Miss?" inquires a neatly dressed boy, holding a well filled pitcher in his hands.

"Yes." She takes it. "Can we get breakfast soon?"

"The dining room is on the floor below. If you desire, I will order your breakfast brought up."

"Do so."

He is gone, and Rose carries the glass of cooling water to the bedside. Eagerly Lilla drank it.

"Ah, that is so good," she cried, handing back the glass. Rose pours out some of the liquid and also drinks heartily.

"What place is this?" cried Lilla pettishly. "How did we get here and why have we left the beautiful house where we came this morning?"

"Hush, dear; a day has passed since we were enticed to that den of iniquity; do not speak of it."

"But it is not near so pleasant here. There are no lace curtains; no soft carpets."

"No, dear; but there is peace and virtue."

"I cannot remember. Oh, yes. I begin to recollect. The general gave me some wine. Is that what makes my head ache so?"

"I guess so, dear. Don't speak of it again."

Lilla sees with surprise that her sister looks pained; so she says no more, only wonders.

The breakfast soon makes its appearance, and with it a message from Mr. Blackstone. He is waiting in the parlor below.

Both the girls are hungry, so they make a hasty meal. Then Rose prepares for the interview with the detective.

Lilla is still unrefreshed, and lies down to rest

awhile yet, and Rose leaves her sleeping. The young man rises as she enters the parlor.

"I have been waiting for some time," he informs her.

"We have just arisen," answers Rose.

"I told you last night I desired a few moments conversation with you; doubtless you thought me bold in asking such a favor; but remember, you stated last night that you were strangers in our great city, and as I am an officer of the law, it is my duty to question you as to your presence here alone, unprotected, without friends; besides, I have taken a great interest in you. Pardon me if I am officious; I mean it only for your good."

"I appreciate your motives, but will you please excuse me from answering at present? I am fatigued. I have passed through a terrible experience. The like I sincerely hope I shall never be called upon to endure again. Give me time. Call again. When next we meet I will try and answer your questions."

"Pardon me," he cried. "I should not have intruded. I did not consider. It shall be as you wish. Always look upon me as your friend. I will willingly serve you;" and he takes his departure. A sigh of relief escapes Rose's breast as she sees him depart. She did not think she would be so successful.

And now to find lodgings. The papers must surely contain advertisements of the same, and so, once more in her room, sitting beside her sleeping

sister, she eagerly scanned the columns of the "Daily News" and "Herald," which the porter had brought her, upon her requesting him to do so.

She took down several addresses. She knew nothing of the great city, but she had observed, while riding along the streets the previous night, that the names of the streets were placed upon the lamp posts, and she thought she would be able to find her way in this manner.

She put on her hat, and locking the door behind her, made her way to the street.

She took the name of the hotel and its location, marking them down upon a card, and then started upon her quest.

She had not gone far before she realized the utter impossibility of finding her way unassisted; besides, Mr. Blackstone might accidentally see her upon the streets, and think it strange that she, being too fatigued to talk to him, should be out but a short time after in the hot sun. So she determined to find a hack.

A short walk brought her to a street so crowded with people that their numbers frightened her. Accosting a policeman, she learned that she was upon Clark street, and could easily find what she sought. Even as she spoke, a carriage rolled by, and the officer hailing it, she was soon inside.

"Where do you wish to go, Miss?" inquired the driver.

She looked at the paper and directed him to drive

to the first address she had marked. The door closed with a bang, and away they flew.

The first advertisement had read as follows:

"Nicely furnished rooms to let at reasonable prices. Apply No. —, Sangamon street."

And before long the hack stopped before a shabby brick house, with closed blinds.

"Here you are, Miss," called the driver, and bidding him wait, Rose rang the bell.

She waited some little time and then rang again.

The door soon opened, disclosing a sharp faced woman with her hair in curl papers, robed in a greasy wrapper.

"Well; what is it?" she demanded.

"You have rooms to let?" asked Rose timidly.

"Yes; three of 'em. Do you want to see 'em?"

"If you please."

"Come in then;" and this very unattractive female held the door open.

Up a flight of dirty, uncarpeted stairs the girl followed the woman, observing as she did so that her stockings had several large holes in them, and her slippers were terribly run down at the heel.

"Here's one," announced the proprietress of the "nice rooms," throwing open a door at the head of the stairs. "This one is a dollar and a half a week; pay before you move in."

The general appearance of this apartment did not suit Rose's ideas of cleanliness; so she said:

"I will look at the others."

"What's the matter with this one?"

"I do not like it."

"Don't like it? Guess you're too high toned for this house," and grumbling she led the way to another, a front room. This was better. The carpet was new, the walls newly papered.

"How much do you charge for this?"

"Two dollars and a half a week; pay in advance."

"And about cooking?"

"Can't cook in this room. If you want to cook, you'll have to git other accommodations. We only lodge."

"I am a stranger, Madam; I did not know."

"Well, I'll tell you, then. You want a room furnished for light housekeeping; that's what *you* want, and we don't have 'em in this house. I used to keep 'em, but the lodgers used to smash so many dishes an' upset the stove and make so much dirt that I give it up. I can't tolerate dirt."

Rose was obliged to smile. She could not help it.

She saw she must look further, and so, descending the dirty stairs again, she thanked the woman, and then consulted the paper once more. There were plenty of announcements to the effect that rooms furnished for light housekeeping, could be obtained at prices to suit the times; but after her experience in the house she had just left, she concluded it would be better to consult the driver as to the best location; so she did so.

"I know jist what you want," he said. "I know a place that will jist suit you. Git in."

And they were soon on their way to the place "that would jist suit her."

A long drive this time; but Rose felt relieved as she noticed the neighborhood they were passing through seemed more respectable, and the houses very much neater than the one they had left.

At last the carriage stopped. They were before a severely neat house, painted yellow, with brown trimmings.

"This is Mrs. Whitmire's," announced the "Jehu." "A mighty nice woman; only a little religious."

A feeling of joy swelled up from the girl's heart. She would surely find love and sympathy where there was religion.

The driver had approached the door and was ringing the bell. No long wait this time. The door opened almost immediately, disclosing the form of Mrs. Whitmire.

"Well, Robert," she cried in a cracked voice. "I have not seen you in a month. What brings you here?"

"Young lady wants rooms. I knew you had more than you could use, an' so I brought her."

Rose had been studying the woman as the driver had been speaking. An old woman, apparently past sixty, clad in a shabby dress of somber black, with spotless cuffs and collar; very clean. A white cap, also perfectly clean, surmounted hair of that unnatural and impossible brown that can be found only in wigs. A pair of huge silver spectacles rested upon the very edge of the thin nose, a round knob on the

end of that organ preventing them from falling off; and Rose fell to wondering if the protuberance had been especially placed there for that purpose. The thin lips, now parted in an attempt to smile, showed several snags of what had once been teeth, yellow from age or neglect, she could not tell which. Altogether a peculiar looking woman; but a decided change from the other.

"Oh, a young lady. Thank you, Robert," cried the owner of the yellow snags. "Come right in, Miss."

Rose followed her. She had two rooms, both furnished for light housekeeping, (rather light, Rose thought them.) She would rent either for three dollars and a half per week, "providing you can furnish satisfactory references," she concluded.

"Myself and sister are strangers here," answered Rose.

The aquiline nose ascended in the air.

"Strangers? I never take in strangers. I must be certain of the characters of the persons I rent to."

"But we are respectable; we will pay you in advance."

"That is not sufficient. I am a Christian woman, and I would consider I had sinned in taking in anyone I was not sure was all right. Do you belong to church?"

"No, Madam."

A deep sigh.

"Oh, what a shame! If you but knew the com-

forting influences of Christianity, how much better off you would be!"

Rose assured her that it might be so, and tried to induce her to rent her one of the rooms, which would really have suited her, being neat and clean; but the Christian woman could not think of such a thing, unless satisfactory references could be produced, and so the girl went out into the street again.

"Couldn't make it?" queried the driver.

"I had no references," answered Rose.

"The old woman is mighty pertickeler. Rented to a man once who said he belonged to church, and turned out a burglar afterwards. She's been mighty pertickeler ever since."

"She surely does not suspect me of being a burglar?" cried Rose in horror.

"No, hardly that; but she's keerful."

Many places were visited. None of them suited. Some did not like to lodge young girls without friends; some charged too high; some were dirty; others too clean, insisting upon the girl carrying down the dirty water and ashes to the street every morning; and it was nearing the hour of two in the afternoon when the hack drove up before a pretty little cottage in the northwestern part of the city.

"You're havin' a purty hard time of it, "remarked "Robert," as he opened the door of the hack for the twentieth time. "I hopes you'll catch on here."

With a timid step Rose opened the gate that led into a small well kept garden before the house,

She breathed a short prayer as she rang the bell, almost dreading the door to open.

She felt relieved when a young woman, hardly older than herself, answered the summons. She was the most promising in appearance of any she had met during the day.

"You have rooms to rent, furnished for light housekeeping?"

"Yes; come in."

As she busied herself in closing the door, the young woman informed the girl that she had been recently married; that the cottage was the property of her husband and as it was rather too large for them, they had thought it a good idea to rent some of the rooms.

"They are niceiy furnished and clean," she said; "and I hope you will like them. Are you married?"

"No;" with a heavy feeling as she thought of her lover.

"Not married!"

"I wish the apartments for myself and sister."

"Oh, you have a sister? How nice. Come this way."

The young woman was a chatty little body, her whole heart wrapped up in her husband, who was foreman in a planing mill, and so was absent during the day.

"Sunday is the only day we really have together, and we generally spend it at home, or go to the theatre in the evening," she cried, throwing open the door of one of the rooms to be rented.

"Theatre on Sunday!" gasped Rose in horror.

"Why yes. We have theatres open on Sundays in Chicago. It is our best day. You see so many working people are too worn out to go on week days, and so Sunday is the only day they have for pleasure or recreation."

"Do you not attend church?"

"Oh, yes; sometimes, in the morning. We do not belong to any church. My husband says there are lots of people who go to church on Sunday, and lie, and press down the poor during the week. We pay our bills and try to be honest; that is the best we can do."

How much different from the Christian Mrs. Whitmire. But she said no more, and examined the room. It was pretty and tasty, and she felt she could be happy there; so she asked the price.

"Well, I never rented rooms before, and I hardly know what to charge. How much do you think is right?"

"Really, I cannot say. You see, I, too, am a novice in affairs of this kind."

"John did not say how much I was to charge. Say two dollars a week; is that too much?"

"No; I think not. I will pay that, and make a deposit now."

"Never mind that. John says there are two kinds of bad paymasters: those who pay in advance and those who do not pay at all. Move in, and pay at the end of the week."

The tears came to the young girl's eyes. Here was unexpected kindness.

"Well, be it so," she murmured. "I shall be here to-night as soon as I can return to my hotel, get my trunk and return with my sister."

"Very well; I shall expect you."

With a light step Rose approached the hack.

"What luck?" cried the kind hearted "cabby."

"I have found a home at last," answered the girl.

"Nice neighborhood, too," commented the driver. "Back to the hotel?" he asked.

"Yes; back to the hotel;" and leaning back upon the soft cushions, a great feeling of relief crept over her. She had found one among all she had seen during the day, who, although not a church member, was at least a Christian.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WORK FOR WOMEN

It was past three o'clock when the hack drew up before the hotel where the girls had stopped the night before. Bidding the driver to await her return, as she wished him to carry them to the cottage, Rose ran up the stairs; remembering as she did so that she had locked Lilla in the room when she had left. She found the door open and her sister reclining in a rocking chair, reading a paper.

"You are a nice one," cried Lilla, as Rose entered; "to go off and leave me locked up in my

room like a thief or a robber. I had to send for the clerk to unlock the door so that I could get some dinner."

"I did not think, dear," murmured Rose.

"I suppose not. Where have you been?"

"Looking for lodgings."

"Have you found them?"

"Yes; very nice ones, too; and Oh, so cheap; only two dollars a week."

"That *is* cheap. Have you read the papers to-day?"

"I glanced over the morning papers."

"Read this." She hands her the paper she has been reading. Rose glances over it, and lets it fall in surprise and shame. It contains the full account of their enticement to Madame Ducrow's house, and subsequent rescue by Mr. Blackstone. Even their names, Rose and Lilla, were published. The article concluded by saying:

"The young girls are now housed at one of our hotels, and efforts will be made at once to learn their story and find their friends. Mr. Blackstone, one of the ablest officers of the detective service, has taken the case in charge, and before long will surely know the facts of the case."

She dropped the paper. She had not thought of the possibility of the occurrence finding its way to the papers. They must go at once. Mr. Blackstone must not know. She did not read the next column. If she had done so, she would have known of the horrible railroad accident which had taken place the day before—upon the same road they had traveled

upon, and would have read the names of John Barton and Charles Atkinson among those who were injured. But she cast the paper aside, and remained in ignorance of it. They were soon ready to take their departure. The clerk was summoned to the room, the bill was paid, the trunk carried down stairs and put in the carriage, and they were driven to their new home. As the carriage rolled around the corner, Rose, who had been looking out of the window, drew back quickly. She had seen the manly form of Mr. Blackstone, walking in the direction of the hotel, and realized that they had left just in time. It was fast approaching the hour for the evening meal, as the carriage drew up before the little cottage. The young woman was evidently expecting them, as the door opened almost immediately.

"Come right in," she cried cheerfully. "Ah, this is your sister. Younger than you, I see. A very pretty girl. John will be home soon, and then we will have supper. I think you had better take supper with us to-night. You will hardly be able to get things ready to cook for yourselves to-night. To-morrow you will be all right."

This was an unexpected kindness, and Rose thanked her with tears in her eyes.

She paid the driver, and he drove off, wishing her all the luck in the world.

The little trunk had been carried to the pretty room, and Rose found clean water and towels in plenty, and the little woman leaving them while

she went to prepare for the coming of "John," they indulged in a change of clothing and a good wash, and felt refreshed. As they sat waiting the summons to the table, Rose quietly placed one arm around her sister's neck, and drew her to her bosom.

"My darling," she murmured. "We are now alone —you and I, all in all to each other. You, through love for me, your sister, have left home to share my sorrows or joys. We have been unfortunate, nearly fell into temptation; you are young and did not think, but Oh, Lilla, now that you have read of the character of the place to which we were unconsciously enticed, now that you realize its horrors, pray to God to forgive you the first sin of your young life, and shun all who approach you in the garb of friendship, unless their motives are clearly proven before. Abide in your sister's love; be content to be governed by me."

With many tears, the young girl promised, and soon tea was announced. They found "John" to be a clean-shaven honest looking young man, seemingly hardly accustomed to his position as a husband as yet. He blushed bashfully as his wife introduced the two girls, and muttered something to the effect that he hoped they would like their accommodations, and then ate his supper in silence.

Rose had given their names as Rosina and Lillian Morton, thinking it best to change them a little.

After tea the girls and Mrs. Wood, (the young woman had introduced herself as Mary Wood, her husband, John Wood,) adjourned to the neat, cosy

parlor, where they chatted and sang until ten o'clock, Lilla playing upon the cottage organ, which stood in the corner, and the evening passed pleasantly.

Once more in their room, Rose took an account of the money she had on hand. She had been allowed fifty dollars per month, by kind Uncle John, for pocket money, to purchase those numberless little items of a young girl's toilet, which seem so indispensable. She had received her monthly allowance, but a few days before her sudden departure, and still had nearly one half of the previous month's allowance unexpended. Consequently, she had been possessed of a capital of nearly seventy five dollars when she had purchased the two tickets. They had cost her $30; the hotel bill had been $2, the hack man $4; so she found herself the possessor of $39. Two of this amount must go for rent. They could certainly live upon five dollars per week as their wants were few, and the simple girl figured that they would be able to exist for five weeks upon the sum she had on hand.

"I will surely obtain employment of some kind in that time," she murmured, and felt easy in her mind.

They arose early. It was a new undertaking for either of the girls to prepare food; but they succeeded admirably, and although the coffee was rather weak, they sat down to their first breakfast as happy as they could be under the circumstances.

Then to scan the papers in search of some one who could find use for their talents.

Under the head of "Help Wanted—Females," they found many advertisements. Chambermaids, nurses, cooks, seamstresses, shirt-makers, coat-makers, etc., etc., until at last, with a cry of delight, Rose pounced upon one, and read it aloud to her sister:

"Twenty-five dollars a week and no capital required. Nice, clean employment for ladies of refinement. No experience required. Call at Nos. — and — Monroe St., between the hours of ten and two."

"Just what we want," cried Rose. "I will call there to-day."

"Twenty-five dollars a week—my! how easy it is to make money in a large city," cried Lilla.

Such a hurrying to clean up the room; such a time dressing, and at ten o'clock Rose was on her way to the liberal advertisers. Nos. — and — Monroe St., proved to be a large stone building, with a machinery depot upon the first floor. Rose looked at it rather doubtfully.

"This cannot be the place," she murmured, glancing at her paper. Yes. There it was. That was the place, so she entered the office and timidly accosted a very thin old gentleman, wearing a green shade over his eyes, while he rapidly ran up a column of figures in a tremendous book.

"This is Nos. — and — Monroe St?."

"Hey, what? Yes; don't bother me," and he frowned upon her.

"But you advertised in the paper—"

"Who? me? Guess not."

"Here it is, sir," handing him the paper.

"Ha—ha—ha—! Nice clean work, twenty-five dollars a week. That's good. You would look nice, working around machinery, wouldn't you? Nice and clean, hey? You *would* be nice and clean in an hour. This 'ad' must be for the people on the next floor. Go upstairs—door to the right."

"Thank you, sir. Good morning."

"Ah, yes. Good morning." He is engaged in his accounts before she has left the office.

Up the stairs to the floor above.

"Ah, yes. This is the place. You come in answer to our 'ad?' Sit down. Warm, isn't it?" and a corpulent gentleman with a dirty shirt and a red face beams upon her. "You think you would like to undertake the introduction of our goods? I think you would find it a nice, easy, well-paying position. I'll just show you what it is. Here we have Underhill's patent baby tender, an apparatus which, attached to a cradle or bed and to the infant, announces when the child moves, keeps the cradle rocking, holds the bottle in place when the child is not a nursing one, and makes a buzzing noise which lulls the most fractious into refreshing slumber. It has found ready sale wherever introduced, and there are a number of ladies making from twenty-five to forty dollars per week introducing them."

"I do not understand—"

"How to sell them? I'll explain. You take the

sample and go to almost any home where there is young babies; then you attach it, and show how it does its work. Then, after you make your sale, you take a deposit, which you bring to this office, and we deliver the goods at once, paying you your commission. The tender sells for ten dollars. We allow you three on every sale; so you see you are only obliged to sell eight per week and you are the richer by twenty-four dollars. You can sell one in almost every house you go; so you can see the amount of money you can make, if you work steadily."

"Then you pay me a commission on what I sell?"

"Certainly. We give you one sample on which you deposit five dollars, which is returned to you when you leave our employ, returning the sample in good order."

"I hardly think I could make a success of it."

"Nonsense. Why, Miss Lee, a young girl just from school, only fifteen years of age, cleared twenty-seven dollars in three days last week. You could certainly do as well."

"I do not think"—

"Then there is Mrs. Babcock—"

"Mr. Moneyman;" a voice behind them.

"Ah, Mrs. Babcock; just speaking of you. How goes it?" smiling broadly and rubbing his fat hands.

"I am not doing anything. I cannot seem to arouse any interest in the minds of mothers; so I brought you back the sample. I cannot afford to waste any more time with it."

The broad smile changes into a sickly grin, as the woman, a pale, seedy, middle-aged creature, with a sad face, speaks. Then a frown contracts the red forehead.

"You don't try, Mrs. Babcock."

"I have walked the shoes off my feet, sir."

"Your appearance is against you, Mrs. Babcock. You should dress better, and look cheerful. You look as if you were going to your own funeral."

"These are the best garments I have, sir, and I cannot look cheerful with a dying husband at home, and two hungry children."

"And I suppose you want your money refunded, after keeping the sample for two weeks, and wearing it out, only getting one order?"

"You agreed to do so, sir. It is not my fault that I cannot sell the article."

"Must be. The article sells itself."

"The sample gets out of order so easily. It won't work half the time."

"Then you have broken it. Let me see." Takes the article. "Yes; broken. Very sorry, Mrs. Babcock, but our agreement was that you were to return the sample in good condition. You can see it is worthless. I cannot refund you your deposit;" and he turns from her.

"But my husband, my children?"

"Can't bother with such things. Good morning."

With a sigh the woman picks up the useless fraud,

and goes to the door. Tears gather in the eyes of the young girl, and she hastens after her.

"One moment, Miss," cries Mr. Moneyman.

"I do not care to enter your employment," replies Rose haughtily, and she leaves the room, Mr. Moneyman muttering: "D—n the woman. She came in to queer me."

The pale woman in black was standing at the foot of the dirty stairs, looking about her in a helpless manner, as Rose approached her.

"Pardon me," said Rose kindly; "but I understood you to say your husband was sick, your children without food."

"It is the truth, Miss. We are destitute. I pawned my husband's watch to get the money I deposited with that heartless wretch upstairs, and now it is gone. I don't know what is to become of us."

"But I should think if you applied to the authorities they would force him to return your money."

"Ah, you don't know, Miss. He would claim that I had broken the sample, and refer to our agreement, and I would get nothing. He has money. I have not."

"But this is robbery; it is not right."

"You don't understand the ways of this place, Miss. Money makes might here, and might crushes right. No; I will never be able to get my money."

To the simple mind of Rose this was terrible. She could not conceive the heartlessness of the man she had just left.

"Never mind," she cried. "Your children shall be

fed. I have not much; but I will do something for you. Here;" and she slipped a dollar in the woman's hand.

"God bless you, Miss," cried the poor creature. "You will surely be rewarded."

"Go home to your husband and children," said Rose softly, "and pray for me," and she turned away to hide her tears, tears of sympathy, pearls of rare worth. She hailed a passing car, and proceeded on her way to answer another advertisement. Mrs. Wood had given her minute instructions as to the cars, their color, where they ran, etc., and the quick-witted girl was growing accustomed to the many ways of the great city.

The second advertiser carried on an extensive dry goods business upon State street He wished sales ladies. The car passed the door, the distance being so short that Rose regretted that she had not walked it.

She entered the mammoth dry goods palace and was soon sitting before the proprietor, a little shrewd looking gentleman, evidently of Hebrew extraction.

"Have you ever had experience?" was the first question he asked her.

"No, but I am quick to learn."

"I don't think you would suit. Our business calls for experienced girls. We have not the time to teach one."

Rose was forced to say that everyone must have a beginning.

"Very true," sharply answered the merchant; "but this is not a school. Good morning,' and Rose walked out with burning cheeks.

She next applied for the position of copyist. She wrote a good, plain hand and thought she could give satisfaction in that respect.

The advertiser informed her that he desired a type-writer, and as she did not understand that, she would not suit.

So on, until four o'clock. Upstairs, downstairs, even in my lady's chamber; for in desperation, she applied for the position of governess to two children, and was informed she would not suit; she was too young, too pretty. "My husband was too attentive to the last governess," the lady informed her, and with a heavy heart she returned home.

"Is there no work for an educated woman to do?" she cried mentally as she got upon the car to return home. "Why, yes," any one will say. What is there? "Oh, a woman can sew and teach and scrub and do lots of things. There are hundreds of young girls employed in our large factories; they get well paid and seem contented." True; but again comes the demand for experience and reference and a knowledge of this, and that, and so on to the end of the chapter. It is difficult for a young, inexperienced girl to obtain employment. Those who have tried know this. Tnere is plenty of work to do, but of such a character that the refined nature of the educated woman shrinks from it. A preacher of the Gospel would be out of place as an assistant in an abattoir

or digging cellars, and Rose Barton would have been out of place as a servant; she who had been accustomed to have others to wait upon her. So although there is work to do, employment for many, the mere fact of refinement and education is a severe drawback to some who would willingly work if they could but find employment suitable to their position in life, who could not endure the hardship and toil which seem to some as nothing. The Italian laborer can work and live for sixty cents per day. Can you?

CHAPTER XL

A STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

For the next day and the next Rose did not search for employment. She was thoroughly worn out by her exertions, and disgusted— yes, disheartened, by her want of success. She had gone out *so* expectant, *so* certain that she would find no difficulty in obtaining that for which she sought, that her complete failure proved a terrible set-back to her, and she remained at home, keeping to her room for the most part; even excusing herself to friendly Mrs. Wood, who would have been pleased to talk with her.

But on the third day her courage returned and she eagerly scanned the many 'ads,' seeking for one that promised favorable results. Mrs. Wood came to the room while she was so engaged.

"Are you better to-day?" she anxiously inquired.

Rose had excused herself on the plea of being indisposed.

"Much better, thank you."

"Excuse me, Miss Morton; but you seem worried about something. What is it? Perhaps I might be of help to you."

The girl told her all, and the kind little body heard her through without comment.

"I *can* help you," she announced after Rose had finished.

"You can?"

"Yes; and I will. You see, before I married John, I was obliged to work for a living, and so I took in shirts and vests to make. I have a sewing machine, and I can easily get all the work you can do. It does not pay very big, but it is better than nothing."

"And will you do this for me?"

"Of course I will. You can have the use of the machine and welcome, and I will go with you to Mr. Nunnemacher, the shirt man, and introduce you, just as soon as I get my house cleaned."

In an hour they were on their way to the shirt manufacturer's.

"How you vas, Maree?" he grunted as they entered the stuffy little office, where the business of the place was transacted.

"Oh, I am well, Mr. Nunnemacher."

"Und your man; he vas vell, too?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Vat you vant to-day?"

"This is Miss Morton, Mr. Nunnemacher. She rents rooms from me and would like to take in work."

"Did you efer make shirts, Miss Morton?"

"No, sir; but I am a good seamstress."

"I don't know if you'll suit."

"Oh, yes she will, Mr. Nunnemacher. I will show her just what to do, and help her."

"All right. You know vat we pay?"

"I do not, sir," answered Rose.

"Vell, I vill put you on cheap vork fairst, und vill pay you sigsdy cents a dozen."

"That is not very much, sir."

"Vell, it's de best ve can do. Blenty of gairls made good vages, und ven you gits pairfect ve vill put you on fine vork."

"You paid me more than that," interceded Mrs. Wood.

"Of course, Maree, but you vas a good vorker, you understand de pisness. Dis lady is a greenhorn."

"Take them," whispered Mrs. Wood. "I'll help you."

So Rose departed from the hot office with a huge bundle of material and patterns, and hurried home, Mrs. Wood encouraging her on the way.

"Were you successful?" cried Lilla, meeting her at the door.

"Yes, sister, and now we can go to work to support ourselves."

She did not lose any time in beginning. In a

short time the sisters were hard at work, Mrs. Wood assisting them in every possible way. All the long afternoon the buzz and whirr of the sewing machine was heard, and by night their combined efforts had turned out four of the dozen shirts.

They did no work after supper; they were both too tired, but by seven o'clock the next morning they were at it again. They completed a full dozen that day. "Oh, how tired I am!" murmured Lilla, as they ate their frugal meal.

"My back is breaking."

"You are not accustomed to such work," answered Rose, who, although every nerve in her body was twitching with pain from the severe labor, and every muscle was wearied, made no complaint.

"And we only get sixty cents for this day's work. Why, Rose, we cannot live and pay rent on that."

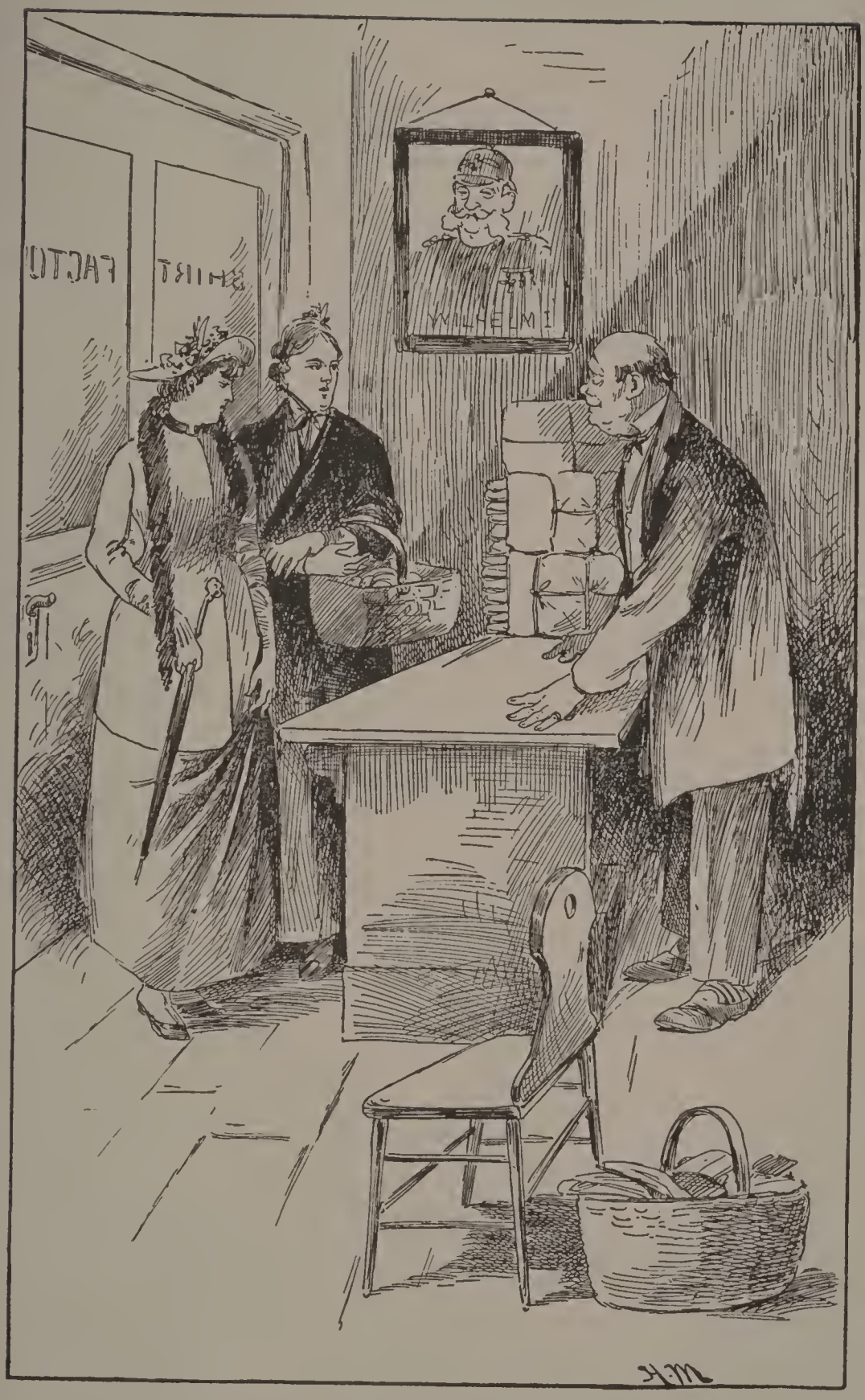
"We will be able to do better after we have become accustomed to it."

"I hope so," and the young girl sighed.

Mr. Nunnemacher had supplied material for three dozen shirts and the girls managed to complete them in two and one half days; then Rose carried her work to the German.

"Vell, you've got 'em done, hey? Bretty good for a new hand. Let me see 'em," and he untied the large bundle.

"Hum; not finished as good as dey oughter be; but I suppose I must make allowance for new beginners. Try and geep your seams straight, my dear, and geep 'em clean."



LOOKING FOR WORK.—Page 311.

He paid her the amount due her and she departed with another large bundle.

For two weeks the two girls worked all day and the greater portion of the night making the coarse shirts. The rough material made their fingers sore, the light of the lamp which they used at night made their eyes ache. Sore, tired backs were no strangers to them now. They were never without them. Lilla fretted and complained; Rose never.

At last the younger sister declared she could stand it no longer.

"I am a young girl," she cried. "I cannot slave my young life away at this drudgery. To think with our combined work we only earned a few cents over four dollars last week. We will both be laid up sick in bed the first thing you know."

"But what are we to do, sister?" answered Rose, meekly.

"Starvation is preferable to this. If we could earn a living I should not complain; but you have been obliged to draw from your own money, in order to live. You know it."

It was indeed true. They could not earn sufficient even by the most persistent endeavors to pay rent and purchase food.

Then, again, Lilla had needed shoes, and they had been purchased. They were obliged to purchase their own cotton for the machine, and taking it all together it was discouraging, and Rose sighed deeply.

"It is better than nothing, Lilla," she said.

"Not much. You will kill yourself, Rose. I know I can't stand it, and I am not going to try."

"Very well; I will work for you," very meekly. The girl hurried to her, and placed one arm about her neck.

"No, you won't, you dear old goose. I will not allow you. Put away your work and listen to me. You have been out and tried to find a position. I have never tried yet. You were not successful; I may be. So I have made up my mind to start out the first thing in the morning."

"But what can you do, dear?"

"Ah, I'll find something. Don't worry and fret; put away the old shirts and we will go out for a walk."

With a sigh Rose did so. They had eaten supper, and it was nearly eight o'clock. They walked arm in arm until they reached the thoroughfare of that portion of the divided city, and proceeded along the brilliant crowded street like two children interested in all they saw.

The sound of music came to their ears. It proceeded from a German beer garden, which was literally alive with people.

Glancing in, the girls saw that the waiters were all young girls.

"I'll wager those girls make more money than we do," cried Lilla; "and I'll be bound they don't work as hard either."

Rose drew back in horror.

"Rather drudgery than that," she cried. "Come, sister."

Lilla allowed herself to be led away; but she remained silent and preoccupied during the walk home. Rose noticed this; so, when they had disrobed and got into bed she said:

"Promise me that you will not allow any such thought as becoming a waitress in a beer hall to enter your mind. You are a simple, innocent child, Lilla. You would be terribly out of place in such a position. Think of your honor, your position in life."

"But they make money, Rose, and do not have to work hard."

"My darling, their work is harder than you think, and God knows what it leads to. Drive any such thought from your mind. I will work and support you. Abide with your sister;" and she placed her lips to the young girl's forehead.

"I was not thinking of such a thing," she murmured pettishly. "Only, I saw how bright everything looked there, and the girls all looked clean and happy."

"Do not be deceived by outward show, dear. Appearances are sometimes deceitful."

They soon fell asleep, and in the morning Rose hastened to finish the last shirt of the lot, preparatory to delivering them.

She was busily engaged when, in turning her head accidentally, she overturned a small ink bottle which Lilla had been using the night before, and before

she could prevent it, the entire contents were spilled over the new garment.

She tried to remove the stain. It was impossible; it could not be done; and so, giving it up, she folded up the work and started upon her way to deliver it.

"I will explain how it happened," she murmured. "Mr. Nunnemacher will not be severe with me this time." So thinking she entered the store.

"Goot morning, Miss Morton. You haf come early dis time. You are getting to be a ferry goot vorkman now. Soon I'll put you on petter vork."

"I met with an accident this morning, Mr. Nunnemacher."

"Dit you? Vat vas it," untying the bundle.

"I spilled some ink on one of the shirts.'

"Vat? Ink? Let me see;" and her heart sank as she saw his manner change, his voice growing harsh.

"Gootness me! Dat shairt is spoiled," he cried as he surveyed the stain. "I can nefer sell dat. You vill haf to bay for dat, Miss Morton."

"I thought, sir, as it was upon the lower portion of the garment I might cut it out and put in a new piece," faintly cried the girl.

"Und botch de vork! No, Miss; I gant allow my vork to be botched. It vill cost you sixty cents."

Sixty cents! The pay for a dozen. The laborious work of the two girls for twelve hours!

"Is not that unjust?" feebly remonstrated the disheartened girl.

"Vat? Unjust? You ruin my goots, und den tink I charge you nodings?"

"The damage is but slight. It can be repaired."

"Don't you tell me vat my pisness is, Miss Morton. Dere is a dollar und twenty cents. Dat is all you vill get," and he laid the money upon the desk.

With tears of despair in her eyes, the girl picked up the pittance, and turned to go.

"Here is your work retty for you," cried the German. "Pe more careful de next time," and he pushed a bundle toward her.

"I do not care to work for you any longer," answered Rose, and she left the office.

"Soot yourself," shouted the German. "If you kin lif vidout work, dat is none of my pisness. Shut de door," he added as she walked out, leaving the front door ajar.

"Dat is de vay mit dem gairls," he muttered, sitting down in his easy chair. "You gif dem vork, und if dey spoil it, und you asks dem to pay for it, den dey gits mat. Vell, let her go. Dere is lots of oder gairls glad to git de vork to do."

Lilla was not in the room when Rose, disheartened, almost sick of life, returned.

"She went out a short time after you," said Mrs. Wood.

"Gone to seek employment," thought Rose. "I hope she will be successful."

The day dragged wearily through. At five o'clock Lilla returned. Rose observed as she entered the little room that she glanced around it as though

dissatisfied. She did not think anything of it at the time. She remembered it in after days.

"Where were you, dear?" she asked her.

"Oh; looking for something easier than shirt-making," answered Lilla.

"Were you successful?" beginning to make preparations for tea.

"No. No one wants a young, inexperienced girl." She spoke pettishly.

"I am *so* sorry, dear."

"So am I;" throwing her hat upon the bed. "I am getting so tired of this way of living, cooped up in a seven by nine room, no fresh air, no pleasure, not even decent food. I am not used to it."

"Neither am I, dear sister; but we must make the best of it. A change may come for the better." She grieved in her loving heart. She loved her young sister. Her words went home to her very soul.

After supper she told her of the incident of the ruined shirt.

"And did that man really deduct the price of the shirt from your wages?"

"He did, Lilla I refused to work for him longer."

"I am glad you did that. The ignorant Dutch fool. We can live without him."

"I hope so, Lilla. We can but try."

Rose went to her bed with a heavy heart and an aching head that night, but sleep came not. She heard the clocks strike twelve, one, two, before she closed her eyes. She was wondering what was

to become of them; what she could find to do now; and sleep found her still undecided.

In the morning the headache was worse, and before night she was in a raging fever.

The doctor, called in by Mrs. Wood, looked grave.

"Over-work and an uneasy mind," he said.

"Will she recover, Doctor?" asked Lilla in a whisper. She was frightened, poor girl.

"She will require good nursing," answered the man of medicine. And she got it. Kind Mrs. Wood was by her bed nearly all the time, and "John" often found it necessary for him to prepare his own meals, but he did not complain. He sympathized with the girls and would have willingly gone hungry rather than have called his wife from the bed of sickness.

For three long weeks Rose lay at death's door, and then, thanks to the attention she received, she rallied and was soon able to be up. The doctor pronounced her out of danger, and after a few more visits ceased to come at all. They were sitting around Mrs. Wood's cheerful table one night at tea when a ring at the door bell startled them.

"Go to the door, John." John went.

"What is it?" inquired the wife as he returned.

"A letter or something for Miss Rosina."

Rose took the white envelope and opened it. She turned slightly pale.

"Bad news!" cried Mrs. Wood.

"No; only the doctor's bill."

"Oh, is that all?" Lilla spoke.

"Yes. That is all."

They continued the meal, but Rose ate but little; little wonder, for the bill for services and medicines which she had just received when paid would leave her without a cent in the world, weak, unable to work as yet, with no prospect of any work to do, even if she had been strong enough. What was to become of her, and helpless Lilla?

And so she ate but little.

CHAPTER XLI

A SISTER'S SHAME

Rose hesitated a long time before she told Lilla of their circumstances, and regretted it immediately after she had done so, when she saw the beautiful face grow hard and cold.

"And so we are penniless?" she muttered.

"Yes, Lilla; or will be when this bill is paid."

"Could you not go to the doctor and explain our circumstances and ask him to reduce his charge?"

"I am too proud to do that, sister."

"Too proud! Then you would rather starve than do this?"

"Something will surely come, dear."

"I suppose Mrs. Wood would board us for awhile." mused Lilla.

"I shall not expose myself to her," said Rose determinedly.

"What are we to do then?" cried Lilla pettishly.

"I shall pay the doctor his bill. He saved my life and earned his money. We have sufficient food to last us for a short time with economy. I shall go out in the morning, and I shall find employment of *some kind* before I return. I shall not be particular. I shall accept anything that I am capable of doing, so long as it is honest;" and Rose looked resolved.

"Very well," murmured the younger sister, and she made no other reply. Her mind was busy, but she said not one word of what was passing there.

Rose kept her word. The next morning she was on her way to the doctor's office before Lilla was awake. She found the physician at home.

"Why, Miss Morton!" he cried upon seeing her. "You are not fit to be out. You are taking great chances;" offering a chair.

"I received your bill last night. I do not like to be in debt, so I came to pay you."

"Why, there was no immediate hurry about that. I always send out my bills the first of every month. I am not in immediate need of the money."

"I would prefer to pay you now," replied Rose. She felt that if the money was not paid, it might be expended for some other purpose, and then she would be unable to pay it at all. True, it left her destitute; but better this than indebtedness. The physician counted over the money she gave him, and returned her five dollars.

"There is a mistake in the bill," he explained. "The medicines did not cost as much as I thought."

The girl breathed a silent expression of gratitude to the Ruler of all for this unexpected windfall, and thanking the doctor, left the office.

She still had five dollars; but five dollars would not last long. She must find employment.

She purchased a paper with very little hope of seeing anything that would suit her, still she glanced over the columns that possessed interest for her, and marked several "ads" that she thought might be productive of favorable results. The first was for an amanuensis, but she found she would not suit, being too young, the lady declared; and all to whom she applied had some fault to find until the girl began to think that the fates were singularly against her.

Shortly after noon she came to the last. The advertisement called for a young girl to work in a restaurant. "One who has had some experience," it read, and Rose had decided to apply at any rate, although she was entirely ignorant of the duties she might be called upon to perform.

"It cannot surely be anything that I am not capable of," she thought as she entered the crowded place. A thin-faced woman of perhaps thirty-five, dressed in a costume decidedly girlish, with hair much frizzed, and wearing an abundance of jewelry, sat upon a high stool behind a little grating with a small window in its front, with a sign bearing the word, "Cashier," attached to the top.

To her the girl made her application.

"You came about the 'ad?' I think the place is

filled; still, you can wait a moment, and I'll send for Mr. Kenroy."

A young man presented a check and the amount it called for at this moment. After he had gone the woman summoned one of the waiters, a negro.

"Go find Mr. Kenroy," she ordered in a sharp voice, and the man hurried away.

While waiting, Rose surveyed the interior of the place. She had never been in such a large institution of the kind before, and its size and the scene of bustle amazed her.

"Where can all these people come from?" she thought.

The room was a large one. Running through the center was a long lunch counter, where fully a hundred men, apparently clerks or merchants, were hurriedly devouring their mid-day lunch. Meats of every kind, pastry, fruits, etc., were piled up upon the long counter, and white-capped and aproned negroes were busily supplying the demands of the patrons of the place. Around the sides of the place were small tables, large enough to accommodate four people each, and they were all occupied at this moment. Hurrying waiters carried large trays literally piled up with small dishes of vegetables, larger ones of meats and fowl, bowls of soup, cups of liquid refreshment, such as tea or coffee, glasses of milk, etc., one placed on top of the other, in pyramids, and requiring much skill and dexterity to carry them safely to those awaiting their coming to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Tacked upon the

walls and suspended from the gas fixtures and in every available space, were signs of different character, some announcing that roast beef would cost 25 cents, or that roast lamb and green peas were worth 30 cents. Every conceivable dish was thus advertised, and from the loud voices of the waiters as they called for their various orders, Rose concluded that each one was desired by some one. Others warned the patrons that the proprietor would not be responsible for the loss of hats, and coats, umbrellas, etc., desiring each one to look out for his own property; also the notice to "beware of pickpockets," was conspicuously displayed.

She had ample time to notice all this before Mr. Kenroy made his appearance. The proprietor proved to be an elderly gentleman, neatly dressed, wearing a white necktie. His hair and small side whiskers were perfectly white, and his general appearance was that of a man perfectly well satisfied with himself and the world.

"No; the place is not filled," he declared, as Rose stated the object of her visit. "And really, I do not think you would care to fill it," he added.

"I am willing to work, sir."

"But this work is not pleasant; the hours are long and the pay not very large."

"I am willing to try it, sir."

"You do not look like a person accustomed to hard work," the propritetor exclaimed, regarding her curiously.

"Neither am I," answered the girl. "Necessity compels me, sir."

"Well; come and I will show you what I need a girl for, and if you think you can fill the bill, all right;" and he led the way to the rear portion of the building. Here the girl found all hurry and confusion. Huge tanks, into which the hurrying waiters piled the dirty dishes, stood against the wall. Into these a pipe carried warm water for the purpose of cleaning the plates and other articles of china and earthenware, and about them stood a number of untidy looking women and girls, each busily engaged in washing the dishes.

Further on, the cooks, warm and perspiring, filled the various orders as they were brought by the waiters, and some women were preparing vegetables for their use.

"This is the work to be done," explained Mr. Kenroy, referring to the cooks' assistants. "There are potatoes to peel, apples and other fruit to prepare for pastry, and many other things to do, which the cooks will explain. You will be required at 5:30 each day, and remain until 9 at night; for your services you will receive four dollars per week, and your board. Do you think you would care about undertaking it?"

Rose felt her heart sink at the sight. The cooks were all colored, the women and girls untidy, even dirty. She, who had been accustomed to refinement, looked in horror upon the scene. She could not

bring herself to contemplate association with these people. She shuddered and turned away.

"I do not think I could do it, sir," she cried.

Mr. Kenroy smiled.

"I thought you would find your ardor dampened when you realized the labor."

"It is not the labor, sir, nor the hours. It is the surroundings."

"Ah, you could not feel at home among these people?"

"No, sir."

They left the kitchen, returning to the front portion of the establishment again Here they found the cashier looking decidedly vexed; while a young girl stood by with tears in her eyes.

"This careless creature has just broken another lot of dishes," cried the woman. "She will never suit, Mr. Kenroy."

"How is this, Elsie?" the proprietor looked grave.

"I was hurried, sir, and could not help it," answered the girl.

"You know, Elsie, you have done this before. You have broken a large number of dishes during the past week."

"I will pay for them, Mr. Kenroy. I will work for nothing until they are all paid for."

"I am afraid you would only keep yourself in my debt. No; I think you had better find another position."

"Oh, don't discharge me, Mr. Kenroy. Don't turn me away!"

"But you are so careless, Elsie."

"Put me on some other work, sir. I know you need a girl in the kitchen. Let me go there. I can't break anything there."

The proprietor seemed to have conceived a brilliant thought. He smiled.

"That might do," he said. Then, turning to Rose:

"Perhaps you could do this girl's work. I think you would be more careful than she."

"What is it, sir?"

The proprietor led the way to a short counter upon the other side of the room. Here the waiters deposited the dishes when first brought from the tables, and the duties of the girl had been to remove the fragments of meat and other food, scraping the dishes into a number of receptacles provided for that purpose, and then placing them in baskets to be carried to the washing trough in the rear.

"This will not compel you to associate with any of the people and you will be by yourself," said Mr. Kenroy, after explaining this to the girl. "The pay will be the same," he added.

"I can do this, sir," answered Rose. It was not work that she would have selected if she had been permitted to choose; but it was something, and she accepted it gratefully.

"Very well; you can begin at once;" and in a short time Rose found herself hard at work, and it was hard work; but she did not complain; she was grateful for the privilege of earning her daily bread.

Toward seven o'clock the rush of customers slack-

ened a little and she was permitted to eat her supper. She had eaten nothing before that day, having left home without breakfast. She did not feel the want of food, the excitement of the place keeping her up.

At nine she was told she could go to her home, and wearied in body the girl took the car that ran near her lodgings.

She opened the door with the key provided by Mrs. Wood when they first came, and went to her room. The apartment was unoccupied; dark and cheerless.

"Why, where is Lilla?" she thought wonderingly.

Without stopping to light the lamp, she hurried down stairs to Mrs. Wood.

"Has Lillian been gone long?" she inquired of the little woman.

"Has she not returned yet?"

"She is not in her room."

"That is singular. She went out about two o'clock. She said she would be back soon."

Out since two o'clock. Great heavens! Suppose something had happened her; suppose she had met with accident. The thought was terrible.

"And did she not say where she was going?"

"No; only that she was going out for a walk."

Going for a walk, and not returned at ten o'clock. Something must have happened. She must go and find her.

She hurried to her room, dreary and desolate now; she lighted the lamp. Everything was as she

had left it, save that the sister who had been sleeping when she had gone, was not there. She hastened down stairs again.

Hark! a ring at the door bell. Perhaps it was she, her sister, returning. She threw open the door.

No. A boy with a note; a boy clad in the uniform of the A. D. T. Co.

"Miss Rosina Morton," he said, looking at the address upon the envelope.

"Yes; I am the person."

She took the note, with a vague feeling of curiosity as to who would send her a message. No one knew her assumed name save Mrs. Wood, her husband, the doctor, Mr. Nunnemacher and *Lilla*. It must be from her sister; but why should she send her a message?

"Some one for you?" called Mrs. Wood.

"Yes—a boy with a message."

She hurried upstairs, and then, sitting by the table, with the lamp light shining upon her pale face, she tore open the envelope and read the message.

"DEAR SISTER: I cannot stand the life that I have been obliged to live any longer. I have tried to make myself contented, but all to no use. I am not fit to work, I never can, and I cannot sit by and see you wearing out your life to support me in idleness; so I have determined to leave you. There is one thing I can do, and that thing I have gone to do. You will be better without me. I am not worthy of your great love, and when this reaches you I shall no longer be worthy to be even called 'sister.' The life I am going to lead is condemned

by some; but I shall at least be comfortable and I shall try to be happy. Do not try to learn of my whereabouts, for even if you found me and were to kneel before me begging me to return, I should not do so. So, I bid you farewell forever. I hope we shall never meet again. Your sister,

LILLA."

Like one dazed, bewildered, dumbfounded, the girl sat, and then, as the fearful truth flashed through her mind, as the words of her sister's letter burned into her soul, she uttered one piercing scream, and fell unconscious upon the floor; and the gentle night wind blew in through the open window, causing the lamp to flicker as it shone upon the pale face of the unconscious girl; upon the open letter; the letter from a lost soul.

CHAPTER XLII

INFORMATION WANTED

William Blackstone was considered one of the smartest detectives upon the force; young, ambitious, he had undertaken cases that seemed utterly impossible to fathom, and had been completely victorious in nearly all. So, naturally, he had a flattering opinion of himself and his abilities, and considered himself a good judge of human nature.

He did not for an instant imagine that the young girl had put him off in order to escape from his supervision; and so, when he walked up into the office of the little hotel where he had lodged the girls, he expected to find them there, and congratulated him-

self with the thought that he would soon know their story, and be instrumental in returning them to their friends, who, he felt sure, were not aware of their whereabouts. He presented his card to the clerk.

"Send it to the ladies' room, whom I brought last night," he said.

"The ladies left here not thirty minutes ago."

He fell back in astonishment.

"Left here!" he cried.

"Yes, sir—took their trunk and drove off in a hack."

"Drove off in a hack," he repeated, hardly able to credit the man's words.

"Where did they go?" thinking they might have left their address.

"Can't say, sir. Paid their bill and took the hack."

So, it was evident that the shy, timid girl wished to be left alone; did not desire to tell him her story.

"But I will find her," he muttered, chagrined that he should be thus baffled.

"The name of the driver?" he cried.

"Don't know him."

"His number?"

"Did not observe it."

"Have you ever seen him before?"

"Not to my recollection."

Gnawing his mustache, a habit when thinking, he walked down stairs. Outwitted by a girl; but he

would show her that she could not put him off in this manner.

"I will find the hackman," he muttered.

But, after visiting all the public stables, and interviewing all the drivers upon the private stands with no result, he came to the conclusion that this was easier said than done, for persistent work for two days failed to find the man he sought.

Then he turned to the newspapers. If the girls had left their friends there would certainly be some advertisement for them in some one of the daily papers. But no. Nothing of the kind appeared, although he read them all, even going back through the files of papers one week before his meeting with them.

"Why should I bother myself about them?" he concluded at last. "Perhaps they have met with misfortune and have come to the city in search of employment and do not wish to have their story made known. It does not concern me. I'll let it drop," and he did, keeping an eye on the papers in the meantime, in case something should appear there.

The weeks passed by. Other cases claimed his attention. He had almost forgotten all about the girls, when one morning sitting in his rooms, reading the paper, his eye caught the following notice:

"Information wanted, of two girls, one blonde, very pretty, slightly past sixteen years of age, the other tall and beautiful, brunette, past twenty. Names, Rose and Lilla Barton. May have assumed fictitious ones. Left their home, — day of August.

Known to have come direct to Chicago. Any information as to their whereabouts will be thankfully received and liberally paid for by their uncle, JOHN BARTON, Room 61, Palmer House."

"I knew it!" cried Blackstone, slapping his knee, and arising eagerly. "They're my parties. I knew I could not be wrong;" and in ten minutes he was on his way to John Barton, room 61, Palmer House.

"Yes, Mr. Barton is in," announced the bell boy who had taken Mr. Blackstone's card to room 61. "He will see you, sir."

Eagerly he followed the boy, and in a short time was ushered into the presence of the advertiser. He found the room occupied by three men—an old gentleman, a young man and a negro. The elderly man held his card in his hand.

"This is Mr. Blackstone?" he inquired.

"My name, sir."

"You are a detective?"

"My occupation, sir."

"Be seated. You bring me news of my nieces?"

"First to be sure that I am upon the right track, sir;" and he described the appearance of the girls.

"That is Rose," cried the younger man, as he described the one.

"Lilla's description," admitted John Barton, as he spoke of the other.

"And you know where they are?" The detective observed that the old gentleman seemed weak. His face, pale, as though just recovering from a spell of sickness.

"You do not look strong, sir. Perhaps I had better not tell you what I know."

"Great God! Nothing has happened to them, I hope;" and the old man fell back in his chair, the younger one hurrying to him.

"Pardon me for expressing myself so awkwardly. When last I saw your nieces they were both in the best of health."

"Then you have seen them?"

"If my description agrees with your knowledge, I have."

"Where—when?"

The detective related all he knew, dwelling briefly on the character of the house where he had found them, attaching no blame to the girls, explaining how they had been enticed there. Told how he had taken them to the hotel, and his discomfiture in finding they had departed. In conclusion he said:

"I have had the depots under surveillance since; so I know they are still in the city, and probably I could have found them if I had continued my search; but I considered that it did not concern me, and gave it up, keeping the facts in my mind, however."

"And you think you can find them?"

"If they are alive, yes. If dead, I can find their bodies."

The young man turned pale. "Pray heaven that nothing so terrible has happened!"

To be certain that the girls you saw were my nieces, I have their photographs, taken but a few

months before their departure. Look at them. Are these the same as you saw?"

The detective took the photos. "Yes," he declared, as the smiling, beautiful faces looked up into his own. "They are the same."

"Then, sir, find them for me, and you shall be amply rewarded. Spare no expense. I am wealthy, and will willingly invest all I possess to bring back my poor darlings. You remarked my pale and weak appearance. I have but recently recovered from a bed of sickness. You probably heard of the accident upon the Lake Shore road some time ago. I was one of the victims; my young friend, Mr. Atkinson, also being injured. I came near death's door, and I really believe that my anxiety to find my darlings was the only thing that pulled me through. Find them, sir. You will never regret it. You will make a new man of me, for I feel that if I do not recover them, it will be my death blow."

"Rest easy, sir; your nieces shall be found;" and the face of the young man flushed with enthusiasm.

"Here is money," and John Barton pressed a handful of bills into the young man's hands. "Do not be niggardly with its disposal. There is more where that came from."

William Blackstone hesitated.

"But you do not know me, sir. You should not repose so much confidence in a stranger."

"Your face gives me a knowledge of your character, sir. I can trust you."

Blushing like a school girl the detective bowed

and thanked him, and then left the room, promising to bring them news as soon as he could.

The young man followed him out.

"About this man, Chatwood," he said. "Is there no way of punishing him?"

"Not at present; but depend upon me, sir, he shall receive his just deserts. Do not mention his name to any one. I expect to learn much through him, and we must not put him on his guard. Let the matter rest with me, and all will be well."

"Very good; it shall be as you wish, and to stimulate your efforts, allow me to state that I will, in addition to the amount which Mr. Barton will pay, add a like sum if you are successful. Rose Barton is my betrothed;" and he left the detective standing in the hall.

"Ha! So that is how the cat jumps, eh!" thought Blackstone, as he walked briskly down the hall. "What in the mischief ever caused those girls to leave so much love, such an uncle, such a home as they must have had? Something peculiar about this."

True, Mr. William Blackstone, something entirely different from anything you have ever had come under your experience.

Blackstone reached the street and looked about him for a cab. There are usually a large number of these vehicles before the Palmer House, but at this particular time there were none there; so the young man looks further.

At last he finds one and is soon inside.

"No. —, Washington Street," he cries, and away he is whirled.

He is going to find T. Smith Chatwood.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Leaving our investigating friend to proceed upon his mission, we will return to Rose.

For an hour she remained unconscious upon the floor. Her scream had not been heard, no one came to her. Upon opening her eyes the open letter met her gaze, and its contents came back to her in an overwhelming torrent of bitter memory.

"Oh, God!" she cried. "My sister; my darling; lost forever!" and in her agony she prayed God to remove her from earth or else to blast her memory; to remove from her the crimson stain of shame which her sister's action had cast upon her.

Gradually she recovered her composure, and sitting erect in the rocker, gave herself up to her thoughts. First she would search the city and find the lost one. Then the words of the letter: "Even if you found me and were to kneel before me, begging me to return, I would not do so;" and she drove that thought from her.

Next she would employ the services of detectives and force this shameless sister to give up her degrading life; but to do so, her story must be known. Mr. Blackstone would find her; besides she had no money. No; that was impossible.

"Must I leave her to perish?" she cried in agony of spirit.

"Pray to God to turn her from the evil of her ways," came the answer to her heart.

Falling upon her knees she addressed a fervent prayer to heaven, begging that the Father in mercy would change the lost one's heart and bring her back to her.

The clocks struck four as she knelt. She arose, feeling more composed. She believed her prayer had been heard and would be answered.

Then she remembered, she must work. Work or starve, for she could not be dependent upon others. She must be at the restaurant at 5:30, and the way was long; so, without rest, without sleep, with a heart filled with sorrow, fit to burst, the sister of virtue donned her hat and shawl and went out into the early morning to slave, to drudge; preferring that to the course taken by the sister—of shame

She performed her duties mechanically during the long day, carefully, precisely. There was no need to complain of her work; it was done conscientiously.

"I have found a treasure," mused Mr. Kenroy, as he watched her, and his mind filled with interest as to who this beautiful creature really was, who, every inch a lady, refined, modest, willingly slaved her young life away in a menial position, when she would have been at home in the crowded "salons" of society.

"Some mystery," he decided, and then thought of something else. He had much to think of. The weeks dragged by. Rose had told Mrs. Wood that

her sister had found a position which necessitated her being away from her.

A lie. Yet one not calculated to harm. Well pleased with the girl's efforts, Mr. Kenroy had, after two weeks, raised her wages to five dollars, and had put Elsie to help her, and in the course of a month, he surprised her by sending for her one day.

"Excuse me, Miss Morton; but I have been watching you ever since you first started to work for me, and I must confess you interest me. You are a lady, there is no doubt about that; your every action shows it. You are refined, educated. Tell me. Could you not find more congenial employment than that you are now engaged in?"

"No, sir. I tried. There was nothing in which my education proved of any value to me."

"And are you really obliged to work as you do?"

"Either that or starve, sir."

"Well, I have made up my mind that you are out of place where you are. I am ashamed of myself for forcing you to do it. I have a vacancy open which you can fill, if you will. The only drawback to it is the fact that you will be obliged to remain here until midnight; but you will not be called upon duty until noon. Do you think you would like to accept it?"

"If I am capable, sir."

"No fear of that. You know the second story is fitted up with private supper rooms. We are obliged to have some one to superintend them. There are parties you know who drop in after the theatre and

so on. Your duties will be to keep a complete account of everything supplied them—wines, food, and so forth, in fact, to control that branch of my business. If you think you would like it, you can begin at once. Wages will be ten dollars per week."

Tears of gratitude came to the girl's eyes.

"Oh, I thank you, sir," she murmured.

"Oh, that's all right, only business, you know;" but despite his manner Mr. Kenroy found need of the services of his handkerchief.

"I really should have a man in that position," he muttered. "People don't care about having a woman about private supper rooms. It's a man's place; but what difference does it make? I'll transfer Jasper from the lunch counter to the rooms above; he can assist her. I have plenty of money. I may as well spend some of it to help a fellow mortal as much as I can."

And so Rose took charge of the private supper rooms.

She found her position a sinecure. There was very little to do, save to keep an account of the materials brought there, and to see that the attendants did not neglect their duties. The man, Jasper, a pleasant-faced young negro, rendered her valuable assistance, and she began to feel almost happy, contented with her lot, and save for the dull feeling at her heart, she would almost have forgotten her bitter sorrow. It seemed almost like a horrible dream. The hours she was supposed to be on duty

were from 12 m. to 12 midnight; but she often found it much later when she got away. Select theatre parties found their way to Kenroy's restaurant, and they did not always depart before the hour of twelve.

It was a bitter, cold night in December. The crackling fire in the girl's cosy little office, or steward's room, was decidedly comfortable, and Rose sat before it, almost dreading the hour to come, when she would be called upon to leave it to return to her room in the far-off northwestern part of the city.

The rooms were all occupied save one. She had been very busy. The office was at the head of the stairs, just inside the folding glass doors that opened out upon the staircase that led to the street, the entrance being separate from the one to the restaurant. Consequently, every one who passed either way must go past the door of the room.

She was thinking of home this night, of Uncle John, of her lover. The tears stood in her eyes as she gazed into the glowing coals, seeming to see loving faces there in their bright depth, appearing to hear familiar voices in the winds that blew down the chimney. Voices on the stair broke into her thoughts—merry, careless voices, both masculine and feminine. Some party coming for a midnight supper. They passed the door, they were proceeding along the hall. She heard the voice of Jasper directing them to the unoccupied room, and soon the memorandum of their order was brought her. Champagne, oysters, cutlets, an extensive meal and

an expensive one. An hour passed by. The orders for champagne grew numerous.

"De party in No. 8 is habin' a good time," remarked Jasper. "Dey is punishin' de 'sham,'" and he left the room.

Soon the sound of angry voices came to her, then the sound of breaking glass.

She hurries into the hall.

Jasper was coming toward her.

"Oh, dey is raisin' de debbil in No. 8!" he cried. "Two of de men am firin' glasses at each oder: I am goin' for a policeman."

"I will stop this," murmured Rose, hurrying to the room.

The voices grew louder as she drew near and opened the door.

"What does this mean?" she demanded sternly, as she saw two men, one pale and determined, the other with his back toward her, both with coats torn and shirts and collars crushed and rumpled.

They looked at her as she spoke, and ceased their struggle.

She turned and looked at the women of the party, and then, with a sudden clutching at her throat, a gasp as if for breath, stood as if petrified; for there before her, elegantly dressed in silks and furs, *sat Lilla.*

Her sister!

Lilla who preferred elegant shame to virtuous poverty. Lilla who had crushed the tender heart of her loving sister.

They stood gazing into each other's eyes for an instant, then Rose advanced toward her.

"Sister," she murmured, holding out her arms. "Sister! Thank God, I have found you."

The sister shudders and turns from her. She draws her sealskin cloak more closely to her, and while the eager, loving one stands ready to receive her in her arms, ready, aye, willing to forgive, she hurries from the room.

She cannot face that other.

"My God!" moans the crushed, heart-broken girl. "Gone; lost to me again." She feels her brain reeling; she grasps at a chair for support, but it is too far away, and she falls upon the carpet, seeing as she becomes unconscious, the face of the man who has had his face turned from her—a hated face. She knows it well.

The face of T. Smith Chatwood!

Jasper is bending over her when she recovers.

"Where are they?" she gasps.

"All got away, Missy. I couldn't find a policeman, and de lady wid de sealskin cloak paid de bill."

CHAPTER XLIII

AN UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT

A drive of fifteen minutes brought Blackstone, the detective, to the office of T. Smith Chatwood, No. —, Washington street, for be it understood, this worthy gentleman had an office, a place of business in the great city of Chicago. The sign upon the di-

rectory of rooms in the building informed you that T. Smith Chatwood occupied room No. 10, upon the second floor, and beneath his name was the one line: "Dramatic and Variety Agent." In fact, he supplied the many variety theatres in the northwest, Hurley, Duluth and other towns, with talent, principally females, receiving a liberal percentage from the many aspirants for histrionic fame, who were willing for the most part to pay the exorbitant rates which he charged, for the privilege of appearing upon the stage, salary being no object to many of them.

And then, the managers of the various "dives" understood the mercenary character of the man, and needing fresh faces, attractive forms, to lure the men from the woods to their doors and keep them there as long as they had money, also paid him liberally for the service he rendered them, in enticing young, foolish girls to leave their homes and become inmates of their dens.

Well could Mr. Chatwood afford to wear expensive diamonds and dress in the height of fashion. He made money and spent it, too.

He had been frequently troubled by the police, and occasionally an irate parent caused him some little difficulty, but he managed to escape imprisonment and still carried on his business.

He was lolling in an easy chair, his feet upon a desk, a fragrant cigar in his mouth, as Blackstone entered.

He grew slightly pale as he saw who his visitor

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was, but recovered himself and heartily welcomed him, pushing forward a chair.

"Ah, come in," he cried. "Trying to make myself comfortable. Pretty cold out. Have a cigar?"

The detective sat down and accepted the cigar. He loathed the man, but had his own ideas about carrying on his business. He believed Chatwood knew something about the two girls, knowing he would be likely to keep track of them for his own mercenary purposes, so he feigned a friendship he did not feel.

"What brings you here?" asked the man carelessly, really disturbed.

"Have you read the morning papers?"

"Just looked over 'em; why?"

For answer, the detective drew the paper containing John Barton's advertisement, and spread it upon the desk.

"Read that," he said, pointing to the notice.

"Well, what of it?" asked the villain, after reading it.

"Does it not strike you that you know something about it?"

"Don't think I do."

"*I* think you do."

"What are you driving at, Blackstone?" He had learned the detective's name from a hack driver who had been driving him one day, passing the detective upon the street.

"You remember when last we met?"

"Yes," nervously.

"You recall the two girls?"

"Well?"

"This is in reference to them."

"You don't say so."

"Their uncle has come to Chicago to find them. He has lots of money. He proposes to spend every cent of it, but what he will be successful."

"What have I to do with it?"

"You know I have been to see the uncle. I have told him all I know. He is anxious to find the man who enticed his nieces to a house of ill-fame."

"Well, suppose he finds me?"

"I think you know, Chatwood. It would go hard with you if he should prosecute."

"Oh, I don't know."

"You don't feel as indifferent as you would try to make me believe. Come, Chatwood. There is money in this. I am on the case and you know me. My reputation is pretty good. I am sure to find the girls anyway, living or dead. I can find them quicker through you. I am willing to give you a share of the profits."

The fellow considered.

"How do you suppose I am to find them?" he said at last.

"I think you know where they are this minute."

"You do?"

"I do."

"What makes you think so?"

"Never mind that. I have my reasons."

"Well, I don't," doggedly.

"Look here, Chatwood. I know you, and your business thoroughly. You have always managed to slip through the fingers of justice up to the present time, because no one ever cared to prosecute you rigorously. But you have struck the wrong man this time; in fact, two men, for the betrothed lover of one of the girls accompanies the uncle. Now, I think you are at least a sensible man, and will find it to your advantage to tell me what you know."

"And if I *should* happen to know something about them; if I *could* tell you where to lay your hands on them?"

"You will find it worth your while to speak."

"You'll do the right thing?"

"Sure."

"Well then, I know where the girls are."

"I thought so," and the detective congratulated himself.

"I can lay my hands on either of them in an hour."

"Well?"

"I can show you where they are."

"That's what I came for."

"And you suppose I am going right now to do it, to get you your reward without looking out for myself?"

"What are *you* driving at?"

"This: I am perfectly willing to give you a tip, providing I am sure of getting my 'divvy.' How do I know you will keep your word?"

The detective felt himself growing angry.

"Look here, Chatwood," he cried. "I can find these girls without your assistance. This city is not so large but what it can be searched, and money will do much. As I said before, you can render me assistance. You have admitted that you could lay your hands upon the girls, and a sytsem of 'shadowing' will reveal your secret. If you are not with me you are against me, and I shall not hesitate to push you to the wall. It would not be a difficult matter to do it, and you know it. Now, I will make my terms. I will give you fifty dollars down, if you will reveal to me the whereabouts of the girls, one hundred more when I find you have stated correctly. Or I will carry on the search myself and put you in the hole if I can. Which will you do?"

The villain looked the detective in the eye. He saw resolution depicted there. He knew he would do as he said. So he answered:

"I'll accept your terms."

"Good. You are no fool;" and he produced the money.

"Now, where are they?" laying fifty dollars upon the table.

The fellow picked up the money before answering, then he said:

"The oldest is employed at Kenroy's restaurant. You can find her there at any time. The other is one of Madame Ducrow's assistants."

The detective jumped to his feet.

"You don't mean to tell me that the youngest has gone to the bad?"

"You asked for information; you've got it."

"Are you to blame for this? Did you persuade her to do this?" sternly.

"She was willing enough. In fact, she mentioned it herself first."

"Tell me all." He was agitated. He had not expected this.

"Well, it seems the girls were in hard luck, had to take in shirts or something, in order to live. The youngest grew tired of it, and told me of it, when I met her on the street by accident one day, and as she wanted to return to the Madame's, it wasn't my place to prevent her."

"Is this the truth?"

"You can easily find it out by going there, and asking her."

"By God! I hope for your sake it is," cried the detective. "For if I find you have wilfully enticed her to her ruin it will go hard with you."

Chatwood turned pale.

"To prove to you that I am willing to do the right thing, I'll go myself and bring her here," he cried.

"You can meet her, and take her to the uncle." He spoke eagerly.

"You will do this?"

"You can depend on me."

"Very well. I will meet you here in two hours. I am now going to see the other. When I return I shall expect to find you here with the girl."

"I'll be here." He had already arisen from his chair and was putting on his overcoat.

Blackstone left him, and re-entering the hack, directed the driver to take him to Kenroy's restaurant.

On the way he sat moody and abstracted.

"Gone to the bad," he mused. "Wilfully gone to her ruin. What will the uncle say? It will be a death blow to the old man, I fear. I must try to keep it from him. He must not know it."

Then he thought of Chatwood, and his brow grew stern.

"The scoundrel. If he plays me false I'll never rest until I see him behind prison bars. He deserves it. I'll see that he gets it."

Arriving at the restaurant, he entered the place and was soon closeted with the proprietor, whom he knew well.

"The girl is here," he announced, after Blackstone had described Rose. "She is not a criminal, I hope."

"Far from it," announced Blackstone. "More sinned against than sinning, I take it. Can I see her?"

"Certainly—this way;" and he led the way to the floor above.

Mr. Kenroy opened the door of the girl's private room, and there the detective saw her, paler, thinner than when he had last seen her, but the same beautiful girl. She recognized him at once, and colored.

"You remember me?" he said, removing his hat and going toward her.

"Could I forget you?" she murmured.

Mr. Kenroy left the apartment.

"Yet you tried to avoid me."

"If you knew all you would not blame me."

"I know all now."

She had resumed her chair, after his entrance. She now started to her feet.

"You know all? What? How?"

He showed her the daily paper, observing her changing color as she read her uncle's appeal for knowledge.

"I have come to take you back to your uncle—your lover," softly spoke the detective.

"My lover! Charley? Is he here?"

"Yes and awaits your coming."

She was weeping, her head resting upon her hand.

"It can never be," she sobbed.

"Oh, yes it can; it must be," he said.

"You do not know all. You do not understand. My sister—"

"She, too, is found. I know all connected with her sad mistake."

"You know where my sister is—Lilla?"

"Yes, and in a short time she will be clasped in her uncle's arms."

"No—no," sobbed the girl frantically. "He will turn from her in loathing. He will not recognize her."

"He need not be told. It would be a charity to keep it from him."

The girl relapsed into silence; silence broken now and then by a soft, gentle sob. The detective

stands behind her chair; his soft voice speaks pleadingly. "Your friends have grieved sorely for you; have risked much—even life itself to find you. Now they await you, with eager, expectant hearts. The lover awaits his betrothed. With anxious expectancy the uncle longs to clasp you to his heart. You will come. You will not hasten those feeble footsteps in their journey to the grave."

She makes no answer—only sobs. Then he tells her of the railroad accident; how nearly the relative and lover met their death; tells her of the ill health of the uncle; pictures him, pale, weak, anxious, works so upon her sympathies that at last she throws her head forward upon the desk and sobs as if her heart would break.

"Oh, heartless creature that I am," she cries; "thinking only of my own great trouble, heedless to thought of the sorrow my action must cause. I shrink in shame from the thought of facing the kind eyes of dear Uncle John. I cannot think of the other—of him whom I love. God help me, yes, I love; and for whose sake I left home, left all, taking my innocent sister, who can never be the same as before. It is my heedless action that has caused it all. Can I ever be forgiven?"

"They await your coming, to welcome you as one returned from the dead; not to censure you for your action."

"But my sister; will she return?"

"By this time her present life must have grown

hateful to her. She will surely give it up gladly, rejoiced at the opportunity."

She arose and dried her eyes.

"I will go," she said simply.

"I knew it," he cried joyfully. "Come at once."

"No, not now. We left home together; we must return together; besides, I must see Mr. Kenroy and tell him of my intention. Go you, and bring my sister to me. Bring Lilla. Tell her I shall not reproach her; I shall never say aught to cause her shame or sorrow. We will go to those who love us, and bending on our knees before our relative, ask his forgiveness, praying at the same time that heaven will grant us pardon. Go. I will await you here."

"It shall be as you wish," he cries. "You will not seek to escape me again?" He says this as the memory of the former experience in the hotel comes to him.

She flushes. "No; I do not wish to evade you now."

He leaves her, and hastens to Chatwood's office. He finds that individual has not returned yet. The door is fastened. He waits for an hour and is growing impatient as he walks the corridor. Ah, footsteps on the stairs, but single ones. It is Chatwood, but alone.

"The girl, where is she?" cries the eager detective.

"Come inside," answers the man, unlocking the door.

"Come; where is the girl?" repeats the detective.

Chatwood throws himself into the chair. He looks worried.

"Before I tell you, Blackstone, I don't want you to censure me. I am not to blame. I have had nothing to do with this."

"With what?" He is growing alarmed.

"I went to Madame Ducrow's, expecting to find the girl there. When I spoke about her, *I found she had left the place two days ago.*"

"Left the place?"

"Yes. You must know, nearly a week ago, we went to the theatre, the girl, a fellow by the name of Amroyd, another lady and myself. After the theatre we went to Kenroy's for supper. Amroyd and I had a dispute that ended in a fight. During the trouble the door opened and in came the sister. The girl Lilla escaped, refusing to recognize her. She has been worrying about it ever since, and two days ago left the house with this fellow, Felix Amroyd."

"Where has she gone?"

"*To Buenos Ayres*, the home of her admirer."

"To South America?"

"Yes."

"Who told you this?"

"Madame Ducrow."

"Is this straight?"

"True as Gospel, Blackstone."

"How did she go?"

"By rail to New York; then by steamer." With a

quick gesture Blackstone picked up the paper lying upon the desk before him, and hastily glanced over its pages. Then, with a cry he turned to Chatwood.

"Come," he said. "We may be able to stop them."

"Where are you going?"

"To the agent of the Cunard line, which is the only one making direct connections for South American ports."

They hastened to the office of the agent.

"When does your next steamer sail, making connections for Buenos Ayres?"

"At three to-day, connecting at Liverpool with South American steamship Co's steamer 'Rio De Janeiro.'"

A glance at the clock; just two; there might yet be time.

"Can you telegraph for me at once to your principals in New York?"

"Certainly, if it is important."

"It is highly so. I am a detective."

Tick—tick—tick. The message flew over the wires:

"Jas. Buchanan & Co., agents Cunard Line, New York city: Stop blonde lady and male escort, bound for Buenos Ayres; man's name, Felix Amroyd, lady young, very pretty. Hold them until you receive advices. WILLIAM BLACKSTONE,
Pinkerton Detective."

An hour passed; then the agent called the detective and handed him a message:

"Steamer sailed an hour before receiving your dispatch. Gent and lady on board. Only couple on trip. Names, Felix Amroyd and wife.

JAMES BUCHANAN & Co.,
Agents, Cunard Line Steamship Co."

"How can this be? It is only three o'clock now. Your ship does not sail until three. Our message was sent at two." The detective spoke angrily.

"Difference in the time, sir. New York runs Eastern Standard, which is one hour faster than Chicago. Two o'clock here is three o'clock in New York."

"D—n standard time" and Blackstone went out upon the street.

CHAPTER XLIV

BLACKSTONE EXPLAINS

"You see I told you the truth," said Chatwood as they reached the street.

"Yes."

"You can't blame me."

"I don't," he answers mechanically. He is thinking.

"I have done all I could."

"I know it. You'll get your money to-night."

"That is not our bargain."

"Have you delivered both girls?"

"No; but I would if the other hadn't skipped."

"Well, then, you haven't filled your part of the contract. My word is good, and you'll get your

money to-night;" and without further parley Blackstone left him.

"Where will I see you?" called the fellow.

"At your office at seven."

He hurried along, his head bowed. He had not yet determined what to do; but he was turning the matter over in his brain.

"That's it," he cried at last, jubilantly, and quickened his footsteps. He had hit upon a scheme which he thought would work. Reaching the Palmer House, he sent up his card, for the second time that day, and soon stood before his anxious employers.

"Well; what success?" cried John Barton.

"The best in the world."

"Have you found them?" Atkinson speaks.

"Exactly."

"Thank God!" both.

"Are they with you?" faintly inquires John Barton. He is overcome with joy.

"Not with me, but not far off. Sit down. I'll explain matters to you." He has himself remained standing. The uncle notices this, and apologizes for his thoughtlessness. Blackstone takes a chair.

"Now if you will give me your attention, I'll tell you what I have discovered to-day."

"We are waiting, sir."

"When I left you, I went to a man who I thought might know something about the girls; the man Chatwood I told you of this morning. As he was the first to meet them upon their arrival

here, I thought it likely he would keep track of them. I found my conjectures were right. He knew of their whereabouts. By promising him one hundred and fifty dollars I induced him to tell me, paying him fifty on account, the other hundred to be paid when I found he had told the truth. I went to the place where he informed me the eldest was employed and found her. She is willing to return to you, although she naturally feels a little backward about facing you."

"That need not trouble her. I shall not reproach her," cries the uncle.

"I shall be only too glad to see her face again," the lover exclaims.

"So I told her, and she is now waiting for you."

"But the youngest, Lilla?" and John Barton grows pale as he speaks, thinking something horrible is to come.

"Well, I was not quite so successful in her case. I know where she is, but can't lay hands on her just yet. You can see, gentlemen, the girls have had a hard time of it since they came here; have had a struggle to exist; so they separated, Rose working hard for a living, while Lilla had an easier time; in fact she got married."

A lie; but told for a good purpose.

"Married!" The men are astounded.

"Yes, married, and if you had arrived two days ago, you would have found her here, but I found when I made inquiry that she had accompanied her husband to his home in Buenos Ayres, South Amer-

ica. I hurried to the telegraph office, or rather to the office of the steamship company, here in the city, just as soon as I heard of it; but the ship had sailed an hour before my message, asking the people in New York to hold them, arrived, and so your youngest niece is on her way to the capital of the Argentine Republic. Here is the answer to my dispatch." He spreads it out before them. "You can still stop them at Liverpool."

With sinking hearts the two men read it; then Atkinson exclaims:

"No; we will not do that, she is not a criminal. We can follow her there. It will be a nice wedding tour for myself and Rose. We must be married at once and take the next steamer for Buenos Ayres."

"I do not think I could stand the voyage," says the uncle sadly.

"Nonsense. It will do you good; nothing like sea air for an invalid;" answers the lover cheerfully.

"But now for Rose," he adds.

"Yes, we must go to Rose," and John Barton arouses himself.

"I am waiting to conduct you," announces the detective.

Jupiter has been absent during the conversation; but he makes his appearance at this juncture. They tell him what they have learned. The negro shows his white teeth in his pleasure.

"Glad dey is found," he says. "Kinder sorry I wasn't heah to wish Miss Lilla good luck on her weddin' day. What am her name now?"

John Barton refers to the telegram.

"Mrs. Felix Amroyd," he answers.

"Amroyd—Amroyd. Whar did I yeah dat name afore?" but he gives up thinking. He knows he has heard it somewhere, but he cannot tell where at that moment.

They leave the hotel and take a carriage to Kenroy's restaurant. Arriving there, Blackstone ushers them into one of the private rooms; he wishes to speak to the girl before she sees her uncle.

They order refreshments from the waiter, who comes to them, and Blackstone leaves them.

He finds Rose awaiting him.

"I have told Mr. Kenroy," she says. "He dislikes to part with my services. I told him I was going home."

"That was right."

"But my sister, Lilla; is she outside waiting for me to bid her enter?"

The detective tells her all. He springs forward in time to save her from falling fainting upon the floor, as she hears and comprehends his words. She soon recovers.

"I cannot return home now," she moans. "I cannot go without her."

He reasons with her; he tells her of the fabrication he has manufactured. She hears him with a dazed, wondering look in her eyes.

"You told them she was married; you lied to them to shield her, and benefit me?"

"Yes. I thought it best. What could I do under the circumstances?"

She looks at him with a look of reproach.

"Did you not think of the terrible blow the truth must inflict when all is known?"

"Again I say it need not be known."

"You say my uncle has determined upon going to South America after her. Will he not know it when he arrives?"

"Excuse me, Miss; I would remind you that there is a means of communication by cable to Buenos Ayres, *via* England. I shall communicate with Mr. Felix Amroyd by this means; so, when your uncle arrives, they will be upon their guard. Probably they will marry; who knows? Your sister is a charming girl."

"Will you do this?"

"I pledge you my word."

She gave him her hand.

"I believe you," she said.

"Will you receive your friends now?"

"Are they here, in this building?"

"Not fifty feet from where you stand."

She turns and grasps the desk for support.

"I had no idea you would bring them here. It is so sudden."

"I thought it best," he murmurs.

She recovers herself.

"Yes; bring them here," she cries.

He hurries to the room where they are awaiting his coming.

"She waits for you," he said simply. They rose eagerly, and in a few moments the sobbing girl is clasped in the arms of those who love her—those she loves.

Blackstone stands outside the door. He does not care to intrude upon the scene. He is a sympathetic young man. He knows the scene will affect him, and then, again, it is not his place.

We will follow his example. Stand outside the closed door, leaving the girl to sob upon the breast of her uncle, then her lover; then to clasp the hand of Jupiter, who feels somewhat neglected because he is not noticed at once.

He remarks, *sotto voce:*

"Miss Lilla done got married. Don't tink it will be long 'fore de oder does de same."

An observant fellow is Jupiter.

CHAPTER XLV

A CLIPPING FROM TWO NEWSPAPERS

"Our readers will doubtless remember the account of the rescue of two young girls from Madame Ducrow's noted establishment, by William Blackstone, one of Pinkerton's ablest detectives. We published a complete account of the affair at the time it occurred. We take great pleasure in stating that the relatives of the girls have found them. One has become married to a wealthy South American gentleman, and has gone with her husband to his home, in Buenos Ayres. The other, we hear, is shortly to be united in the "Holy Bonds," with a Mr. Charles Atkinson. May for-

tune smile upon them in their journey through life, and may the bitter experience to which the ladies have been brought face to face, but teach them the true side of life and make their present happiness all the more enjoyable. We understand the couple, when married, propose going to South America, to join the sister. We cry, 'Bon voyage.' "

* * * * * * * * * * * *

AN ITEM OF INTEREST.

"Among the passengers for Liverpool on board the steamer 'Nubian Monarch,' which sailed to-day, were Mr. John Barton, Mr. Charles Atkinson and wife, and Jupiter Solomon, Mr. Barton's servant. They are *en route* to Buenos Ayres, Argentine Republic, *via* England, the trip being the wedding tour of the Atkinsons, who have been recently married. Mr. Barton has, during his long life, visited and resided in many parts of the world, having been a resident of Melbourne, Australia, for many years. They propose to remain in our sister Republic for a short time only."

BOOK IV—CHAPTER XLVI

A CABLEGRAM

Night in Buenos Ayres.

The moon, in its full, reflects its rays upon the waters of the Rio de la Plata, or river of silver, justifying the title, for it is truly a river of silver to-night.

The broad, granite-paved avenues are thronged with people, principally amusement-seekers, and the brilliantly lighted entrances to the Victoria theatre, the Colon opera house, the Franco-Argentine theatre, are blocked with the gayly dressed, voluble, French,

English, Spanish and Italian population, who frequent each. It is a beautiful night. Never has the capital city of the Argtenine Republic appeared to greater advantage, and the discontented wanderer, beholding it in all its beauty, might well say: "Here will I tarry. Earth has provided a resting place at last."

Upon the crowded avenue two men are approaching each other, each unconscious of the other, each entirely dissimilar in appearance; one tall, erect, carrying himself with a semi-military carriage. A man with hair white as the Alpine snows, smoothly shaven, save for the carefully trained white mustache; a man with eyes stern and terrible in anger, when in repose soft and womanly, with an almost beseeching, appealing glance, as if asking for something apparently beyond his reach;—something that never comes. The other, short and stout; one would almost say obese, for his corpulence is plainly discernable to even a casual observer; apparently of nearly the same age as the other, wearing English side whiskers and mustache, which at one time must have been decidedly of that color designated as "red," but which are now streaked with silver. A man who looked upon all about him with a self-satisfied air, as if perfectly contented, caring little if the world moved on or not, satisfied with himself and the world at large. The first is known as Senor Andrew Grey, judge of the municipal court; the other, Arthur Amroyd, an Englishman, well known in the South American metropolis as a man of wealth. They meet.

"Ah, Grey! Beautiful evening."

"Magnificent."

"You can talk of your countries; but this one suits me, I can tell you. Rather warm sometimes, but a glorious climate, taking it as a whole."

"Yes; if one does not mind occasional epidemics, in the form of yellow fever and so forth. I like it. I have found contentment here; I am well liked and respected."

"Save by the poor devils who have been brought before you and are now languishing in prison."

"None can say but what my decisions have been just, Amroyd."

"No. You are as Shylock says a righteous judge. No one can gainsay that."

"But, to change the subject; any news from the wandering son?"

"Oh, Felix? Yes. A cablegram reached me some time ago announcing that he had taken passage for home upon the 'Rio De Janeiro,' which left Liverpool upon the 16th instant. I believe she is due in a day or so."

"And I presume you will welcome home the prodigal, kill the fatted calf, marry him, and so on to the end of the chapter."

The father heaved a sigh.

"Yes; I suppose so, providing he will have it that way. Which way are you going?" He evidently wished to change the subject.

"To the telegraph office; official business messages from Montevideo."

"I will accompany you. No objections, I hope?"

"None at all. I shall be glad of your company."

Amroyd links his arm in that of the judge, and they proceed upon their way.

Evidently Andrew Grey has very important business, for he is absent in the private office of the manager for a long time. Arthur Amroyd occupies his waiting moments in reading the official notices posted about the room, and smoking. Finally the judge makes his appearance.

"I suppose you thought I would never come?" he says with a smile.

"Oh, men upon official business need much time, sometimes."

They turn to leave the place.

"Excuse me, is not this Mr. Arthur Amroyd?"

It is the operator who speaks.

"Yes; why?"

"We have received a cablegram, sir."

"For me?"

"Not exactly; for your son."

"For Felix? Got here before he did. Let me see it."

"I was going to deliver it to you, sir. I suppose you will hand it to him?"

"Certainly."

The operator hands him the dispatch.

"Probably important," mutters the father and he opens it.

"To Mr. Felix Amroyd, Buenos Ayres, Argentine Republic. Sister and relatives of lady on their way

to Buenos Ayres. When they arrive, you must be married. Think you understand me. William Blackstone, Pinkerton detective."

Thrice the parent reads the message. He cannot understand it.

"When they arrive, you must be married," he repeats. "Why," he cries aloud, then growing angry, "Who in the devil is this William Blackstone, Pinkerton detective, who dictates to my son? Why must he be married? Who is the lady?"

The judge smiles.

"Are you asking me for information?" he inquires.

"Look at this. Perhaps you can explain it."

Andrew Grey reads the telegram.

"I can scarcely understand it," he says. "Probably your son can explain it upon his arrival."

The father turns to the operator.

"Any news of the 'Rio De Janeiro?"

"Telegram received an hour ago, sir. She is at the mouth of the Plata. Passengers will land at noon to-morrow."

"Noon to-morrow. I'll be on hand to welcome my boy and hand him this peremptory order, from William Blackstone. Come, Grey."

The two men proceed on their way homeward. They part at Amroyd's residence.

"Stop in, Grey, at eleven," cries the father. "I wish you to be with me when I meet my son."

"Gladly. I will be at leisure."

And the judge proceeds on his way home.

He resides some distance from the house of his

friend, in an opposite direction from the other. He is unmarried, an old Spanish woman doing the work of his small establishment. His wants are but few, and the old woman serves him faithfully.

He smiles grimly as he hastens homeward. He can see more in the cablegram than the doting father. He knows young Amroyd. In his capacity as municipal judge he has been forced to fine the young man for many escapades in which he has been a leading spirit.

Yes; he thinks he can understand this cablegram which comes too soon. He mutters as he walks along:

"Another act of youthful folly. Some young girl of good parents, probably highly connected, enticed from home by the young scoundrel. Detective on the track has ferreted the matter out. Parents after him. Detective sends warning. I see it all; but it is better to let Amroyd find it out for himself."

He has reached a dark portion of the street. It is now nearly eleven o'clock. Suddenly he fancies he can hear stealthy footsteps behind him. Purely fancy, for he finds upon turning quickly that there is no one in sight, and no possible place to hide, unless it is up in the trees, and one must be quick to take advantage of the protecting foliage. There are not many large trees in Buenos Ayres; so the trunks are not large enough to hide a man's body.

He hastens along. There is surely some one following him. He hears the footsteps the second time.

"Fancy," he mutters, and pays no further attention to it. His mind wanders off upon other subjects. The wistful appealing look in the large eyes grows more apparent; but no one sees it. Tears stand in them before long. So engaged is he that he fails to hear the hurrying footsteps behind him. He does not see the dark form creeping behind him like a shadow. The moon has been hidden under a cloud. It now breaks forth and in the bright rays we can see the glitter of something in the hand of the stealthy follower. The judge does not observe this. He is thinking. His step has unconsciously grown slower. He stops for a moment. He is looking at the silver queen of night. His lips are moving, praying, perhaps. The dark shadow is almost upon him.

A scream sounds out upon the still night air.

"Turn, senor, or you die."

It is a woman's voice. He turns in time to avoid the murderous blow of the glittering poniard; in time to save his life.

"Maledicto!" mutters the defeated murderer, and he turns and flies.

Andrew Grey looks after the receding form in dazed surprise.

It has all been so sudden, that he can scarcely realize the danger from which he has escaped.

He has been saved, and by a woman. Her words have saved his life. But where is she?

He retraces his steps. He sees a dark form lean-

ing against a high wall that encloses the grounds and residence of some one of wealth.

Yes, it is a woman, and in the moonlight he sees that she is robed in the sombre garb of a sister of charity. She has given the warning. It must have come from her.

"You have saved me from the assassin," he says, removing his hat reverently.

"I am so thankful," she murmurs. "I came in time."

"How came you to know it? I did not observe you upon the avenue."

She tells him of a conspiracy overheard by her. He had sentenced an Italian brute, who had nearly killed his wife, to hard labor in the interior. The brother had sworn vengeance. She had been returning from the sick bed of a woman and heard it all, and came in time to prevent it.

She has kept her face averted while talking. He has not seen it. Over and over he thanks her. She says not one word until he finishes.

"Are you not fearful that they will retaliate upon you for your warning? They are vindictive people, these Italians."

"God will protect me," she answers, drawing her form erect, and raising her eyes to the heavens. The moonlight shines full upon her face—a beautiful face, though marked with age and suffering. A face outlined by the white bandage and black veil. A face that causes him to stagger and seize a tying post upon the curb for support.

He gasps for breath. He is evidently distressed. She hurries to him.

"You are ill?" she asks in her low, sweet voice, a tender woman's voice.

"You here?" he cries. "You recognize me?"

She looks at him in gentle amazement.

"I know you as Andrew Grey, judge of the municipal court."

He seizes her by the arm and looks down into her eyes. She draws back; she is growing alarmed at his action.

"You do not know me as anything else?"

"No. I never spoke to you before in my life."

He looks as if he did not believe her.

"Kindly release me," she cries. "You hurt me."

"Pardon me," he mutters. "Can I be mistaken?" he says, as if to himself. He has released her. She is preparing to leave him.

"Tell me," he cries. "How long have you been here? You are surely not of these people. Your accent tells me you are either English or American."

"I am an American, Senor," she answers calmly. "I have resided here for twenty-eight years."

"Twenty-eight years! I must be mistaken." He never takes his eyes from off her face. She bids him farewell. Again he thanks her for the service she has rendered him.

"Thank not me; thank God," she replies, and leaves him. He looks after her. Suddenly he follows her. He overtakes her.

"Pardon me, sister; will you kindly tell me your name?"

She looks up into his face. "I am known as Sister Agnes," she says, and is gone.

Sister Agnes! He does not follow her this time; only stands in the moonlight with a startled, bewildered look in his eyes. Stands as if petrified, until the loud toned bell in the tower of a church near by, tolls out the hour of midnight. Then he goes to his home; to his bed; but not to sleep. Memories of other days crowd into his busy brain, until the first rays of coming day shoot through his half-closed blinds and bring into relief the furniture of his apartment. A woman's face. One as if from the dead. The dead past of long ago. Sister Agnes!

CHAPTER XLVII

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

"Felix!"

"Hello! Oh, it is you, Father. Kind of you, I'm sure." And the son, returning from a year's travel in the United States, clasps the father's hand.

"You expected I would meet you?"

"I didn't know. We parted a little in anger, you know."

"That is all forgotten, my boy. Boys will ever be boys, and the escapade that gave rise to my anger has passed from my mind."

"I thought it would, and so I ventured to send you the dispatch announcing my coming. Glad you've forgiven me. Much more pleasant to be on good terms with one's relatives than to be on the outs."

"And besides you are my only son. Felix, I considered all this."

Arthur Amroyd, thinking only of his son, has not noticed the elegantly dressed, beautiful girl who is his companion. She was leaning upon his arm when the old gentleman accosted him, but is now standing in the background.

Suddenly the father espies her.

"Your companion," he says in a low tone. "You have not married since you left home?" He asks the question half reproachfully.

The fair face of the young man becomes suffused with blushes. He hesitates.

"No," he answers; "not married exactly; thinking of it." How can he explain the presence of his companion?

"Young lady I met in Chicago," he says, quickly, hastily. "An orphan. I offered my services to escort her to her destination. I'll introduce you. Miss Morton, my father, Arthur Amroyd. You have heard me speak of him."

The girl acknowledges the introduction with a bow, darting a look, half of anger, half of reproach upon the scarlet, guilty face of her escort.

"Glad to meet you, I am sure," cried Arthur Amroyd. "You must make my house your home, for the present."

"Yes, of course," cries the young man, evidently ill at ease.

They proceed to the place where the family carriage is in waiting.

"I expected Andrew Grey to join me in welcoming you home," remarks the father, as they are being whirled homeward. "For some reason he has disappointed me. You remember Judge Grey?"

"I could scarcely forget him in a year," answers the son, arousing himself from the reverie he has been indulging in since they entered the carriage.

"It seems to me much longer," says the father.

The drive home is a silent one. The young girl looks out upon the scene with quiet, expressionless eyes. The son is engaged in deep thought. The father does not interrupt him. Suddenly he espies a familiar figure on the sidewalk.

"Ah, there he is now; drive in to the sidewalk," he cries to the coachman.

Andrew Grey stops as he recognizes the equipage. He removes his hat and approaches the carriage.

"You *are* a nice fellow, to disappoint me," cries Arthur Amroyd.

"I must beg your pardon; I did not retire until late. I—overslept myself."

He has not slept at all. He purposely avoided the appointment.

"Here's Felix and a Miss Morton, a young lady from Chicago. Felix acted as her escort as she was unaccompanied."

"Very kind of Felix, I am sure;" and Judge Grey

looks searchingly at the young man, who shifts uneasily in his seat, under the piercing gaze. The penetrating eyes grow kindlier as they rest upon the beautiful face of the girl. He secretly wonders what she has ever seen in Felix Amroyd to give up home for his sake.

"He has not told his father yet," he muses. Suddenly he thinks of the cablegram. Has it been delivered?

He speaks of it to the father.

"By Jove! I forgot all about it," cries Arthur Amroyd, and then as he remembers the words he has read, his brow becomes clouded. The lady. The message speaks of a lady. Can it have reference to this one? Is his son deceiving him?

He hands the dispatch to the young man, watching his face as he reads it, and he is not the only one who is interested in the expression of Felix Amroyd's countenance. Andrew Grey is watching him covertly, the girl attentively.

They see the insipid countenance grow red, then pale; then, with a muttered curse, which he endeavors to hide with a light mirthless laugh, he thrusts the message into his coat pocket.

"Have you read this?" he asks of his father.

"Yes; I thought it might be a matter of importance. Its tone puzzled me; can you explain it?"

"Yes, in time; when we get home. This is hardly a proper time or place." He speaks evasively.

Still the girl remains silent, but her brain is busy with many thoughts. They proceed on their way

home, Andrew Grey bowing and leaving them after the reading of the message. He understands it all. He has read the soul of Felix Amroyd as he watched his face.

"He does not intend to marry the young thing," he mutters. "But justice shall be done her. I will interest myself in this matter."

The balance of the ride is continued in silence. The girl is sitting alone upon the back seat of the carriage. She has her eyes fixed upon the pocket into which the cablegram has been thrust. Probably she is curious to know its contents.

They reach the handsome residence of the Amroyds. The carriage stops before the door. Arthur Amroyd alights first, then the son assists Miss Morton. As she descends the steps her hand stealthily removes something from the side pocket of the loose coat and crushes it into her dress pocket.

Miss Morton has the cablegram!

She has been interested as to its contents since she has seen the effect it produced upon Felix Amroyd. Now she will know what news it brings.

A pleasant room is assigned to her use. "For a few days," as Arthur Amroyd says. He looks upon her as a visitor. He does not understand matters yet. Rather obtuse is this worthy gentleman.

She does not come down to dinner.

"Fatigued from the journey," she sends word: so father and son eat alone, served by the stolid butler. They linger a long time over their wine. The father is waiting for his son to explain the dispatch

from the United States. The son is not anxious to give an explanation. So they part, after smoking several cigars, the son pleading need of rest, the father excusing him. Felix Amroyd goes to his room, a frown gathering upon his brow, as he throws himself into an arm chair.

"Relatives coming to Buenos Ayres," he mutters. "Must be married." And this thought causes the frown to grow heavier. Not a pleasant man to look upon, this Felix Amroyd, when out of humor. He rises and goes to the wardrobe where he has hung the coat, in the pocket of which he has put the dispatch from William Blackstone, Detective. He has heard of this man, and somehow fears him, although thousands of miles intervene between them.

He searches every pocket.

The cablegram is not in any of them!

"I surely put it in one of these pockets," he mutters.

Then he thinks it might have dropped upon the floor of the carriage, and he hurries to the stables. He inquires of the coachman, the grooms. No; they have not seen it. He returns to his apartment, vexed and disturbed. He cannot understand what has become of the dispatch.

Suddenly a thought comes to him. A thought that evidently causes him alarm, for his brow gathers in a heavier frown, and his eyes glance furtively around.

"That must be it," he cries. "I must have dropped it, and she has found it. I must see if this is true."

The house is silent. His father has gone out. He heard the door jar behind him. The servants are all below. He will go to the room of Miss Morton, and see if she has found the lost message, and demand its restoration, if so.

"Although she knows its contents already," he mutters as he crosses the hall.

He enters the room without knocking. He sees her sitting with her back to the door.

She rises as she hears him enter, and turning, faces him.

"You might have shown me the respect of knocking," she says, in a low bitter tone.

"We are sufficiently well acquainted to dispense with ceremony," he answers with a faint tinge of sarcasm in his voice.

She reddens with either shame or anger, but makes no reply, merely pointing to a chair.

"I have not come to linger," he says. "I have no time for love making to-night. I came to ask you a question."

"And *I* am glad you have come," she cries with flashing eyes. "I, too, have a question to ask."

"Which I probably will not find it difficult to answer," he sneers. "But first, hear mine. You saw me receive a cablegram to-day. I have lost it. Have you seen it?"

She looks him in the face.

"Yes," she answers quietly.

"Oh, you have? Perhaps you have read it."

"Yes."

"You dared to read my private dispatch?"

"I certainly did. I find it concerns me, even more than yourself."

"Never mind whom it concerns. You had no business to read it." He speaks sullenly.

"I thought differently. Is this all you wish to say?"

"Nothing more, save to demand the immediate delivery of the dispatch."

"I shall consider the matter," she answers quietly. "Now hear my question: The cablegram states that my sister and relatives are on their way here. In a fortnight, at the latest, they will arrive. Do you propose to carry out the suggestion of Mr. Blackstone?"

"Marry you?"

"Yes; marry me. Remember; you enticed me from Chicago with a promise of marriage. You found me a young, foolish girl, who, wearying of a life of toil, had determined to cast herself away. Already had that determination grown weak. I should have returned to my sister the following day, repentant, unsullied, save by association; but I met you. You exerted every effort to win my love. You succeeded, and I became lost forever. You promised to make me your wife. I consented to accompany you here, to your home. Now I ask you: Do you propose to act the part of a man, or will you act the miserable scoundrel, that I now know you to be?" She has spoken calmly, quietly; her voice has been low and soft, but every word goes home to his soul; they only excite him to anger.

He looks scowlingly upon her, and says scornfully:

"And because you were so weak, so foolish as to believe me, is that any reason why I should sacrifice my future, my position in society, by a marriage with you? No; I shall not marry you. You are supposed to be a Miss Morton, of Chicago, to whom I have simply acted the part of escort, and to whom my father has extended the courtesies of his house for a few days only. There are plenty of places in the city where women of your stamp will be made welcome. Go to one of them. You are familiar with that mode of living."

She turns pale as she hears the bitter, cruel, insulting words; words sufficiently loud to be heard by any one passing in the hall. Then she says:

"And this is your answer?"

"Yes. Surely you did not expect any other?"

"Very good. Be it so. When my sister and uncle arrive, they will find me sheltered beneath the roof of one of these places that you say will make me welcome. When they ask me how I came there, I will tell them *you* sent me there. I will tell my story to the populace. Every living creature in Buenos Ayres shall know Felix Amroyd as he is. I shall keep the cablegram, and show it to the world. You have had a chance to prove yourself a gentleman. You have refused to accept it. Now, I shall prove that you are a poor, mean, despicable scoundrel, worse than the sneak thief who steals your silverware; for you have stolen that which is of

more value—*a young girl's honor.* Oh, they shall know it. If you condemn me to shame I shall drag you down with me, and like Samson of old, carry death to my destroyer, even if it accomplishes my own."

He springs toward her.

"Give me that cablegram," he hisses.

"No; a thousand times NO!"

"You propose to do as you say?"

"I have said it. I did not talk idly."

"Then by G—d, you shall never leave this room alive."

He means to frighten her. He is too much of a coward to do aught but threaten.

He advances toward the door. She has picked up a pair of scissors from the table. Her eyes flash ominously.

"Stand from that door!" she cries, her voice loud and piercing; "or I shall *kill* you," and she means it.

He puts his hand to the inside pocket of his dress coat and the next moment a revolver flashes in his hand.

"Put down those scissors, or I'll shoot them from your hand," he cries hoarsely.

She heeds him not; she springs upon him. She seizes the hand in which he holds the glistening revolver. She sees him trying to press the trigger; she throws his hand back, and a loud report sounds out upon the night.

The pistol has been discharged, and *the ball has*

ploughed its way through the body of Felix Amroyd.

He falls upon the carpet, his life blood dyeing the rich fabric a bright crimson.

The door flies open; the frightened servants have heard the shot. The wounded man turns upon his side and gasps:

"*Lillian! My God! you have killed me!*" and goes to meet his maker.

The girl never swoons; she looks down upon the corpse with stony, staring eyes, until she feels the hand of the butler laid upon her arm and hears him say:

"We must detain you, Miss, until the officers arrive; *this is murder.*"

Then she gives vent to one piercing scream, and faints in the servant's arms.

CHAPTER XLVIII

A PRISON CELL

Judge Grey is eating his frugal morning meal. By the slow methodical manner in which he is disposing of his food, one can see that he is eating mechanically, merely from force of habit, not because he wants the food, but because it is before him.

He is thinking; the high, noble forehead is corrugated by many deeply set lines, his eyes are thoughtful and his expression indicates deep study.

He is thinking of the fair girl he saw in the car-

riage of Arthur Amroyd, the day before. She has greatly interested him. He would give much to know her history. His thoughts are rudely interrupted by the door suddenly flying open and admitting Arthur Amroyd; not the easy-going, self-satisfied man of yesterday, but Arthur Amroyd, with disarranged clothing, and neglected hair. Wild, pale, horrified.

His appearance startles the judge.

"For heaven's sake, man, what ails you?" He arises from his chair.

"Murder!" cries the man. "Murder most foul! My son; my boy!" and falling into a chair, he bursts into tears.

Andrew Grey looks at him as if he thought his visitor had become suddenly bereft of his reason.

"Murder?" he repeats. "Who has been murdered?"

"My boy; my only son;" and while the astounded judge listens with incredulous surprise, he tells the story. He cannot believe it; cannot credit the truth of the assertion.

"That fair, beautiful girl, yet in her teens, a murderess!" he believes that there must be some terrible mistake.

He pities the father, as he sits before him, utterly cast down by the weight of his sorrow. His kindly heart feels for the miserable man. But the girl; what has become of her? He asks the question.

"Don't speak of her; don't mention her name. The officers took her in charge an hour after the

deed was done;" and the stricken father relapses into a state of bitter grief.

In prison; the girl in prison? Yes; and if the investigation proves her guilty, he must try her. He must pronounce sentence upon her. He shudders as he thinks of it. Shudders as he realizes the penalty of murder.

He arouses the father, and they hasten toward the palatial mansion, now thrown into mourning and sorrow. News vendors pass them upon the street. Already the papers are full of the account of the tragedy. It has been printed in all the tongues spoken in the city. Thousands of people are reading it; thousands condemn the young girl. The crime is a horrible one; but, somehow, Andrew Grey pities the girl, not the victim. He does not know the circumstances as yet, but he feels in his soul that she is not to blame. He will wait and see.

The girl has been hurried to prison. The officers of the law summoned by some one of the servants roughly conduct her to the bleak, cold-looking, merciless jail. She does not half understand it yet. She makes no effort to break from them. She is docile enough; yet the officers seem to think it necessary to handcuff her; to place the cruel bracelets upon the delicate wrists. She might grow desperate; this fair North American. They had heard much of the desperate characters from the United States. She does not realize her position until the iron doors close with a sullen clang upon her;

"STAND FROM THAT DOOR, OR I WILL KILL YOU!"
—Page 381.

and then, with a shriek, she realizes that she, the tenderly reared niece of John Barton, is an inmate of a prison, *a murderess*, so they say, although she knows that Felix Amroyd brought about his own death.

She beats upon the iron doors until the delicate white skin shows the traces of blood coming from the bruised and torn flesh. She cries aloud in her anguish. She shrieks in her despair. No answer comes to her cries, naught save the hollow echo of the granite walls.

It is night, oh, so dark! She looks about her with terrified eyes. Nothing but black gloom; gloom that envelopes her in its sombre depths, that presses upon her heart so that she can scarcely breathe.

No! What is that?

Something seems to move in the darkness; something coming from out the pitchy blackness of the corner of the cell.

She shrieks aloud in her terror. She expects every moment to be clasped in the clammy arms of some horrible thing.

No; it does not come.

She boldly walks to the corner of the cell. Nothing there; only the hideous phantom of a disordered mind.

She breathes more freely; she has been cold, oh, so cold. Now she grows warmer. She seems burning up with heat. She feels her blood coursing through her veins like fire. Her heart beats with

a strange, dull thud. She can feel its every beat. She counts them, one to one thousand. How will it all end? How long will it be before that heart, so heavy, so dull, will cease to beat?

MURDER!!!

The penalty is death!

Death! She shudders. No—no. She is innocent. Great God! They cannot condemn her to death. She is burning up with this terrible heat. She staggers to the window; the small aperture in the side of the dungeon.

Ah, cool air; delicious, refreshing air.

She looks out upon the night. She can see the moon, just emerging from a cloud. Beautiful orb of night!

She stands and watches it until day breaks, and the silver crescent fades from view. Day has come. She feels some relief that she is no longer in darkness; no gloom, save the pall that shadows her life. Her life! Of what benefit is it to her?

The jailer brings her food—coarse bread, black coffee. She turns from it with loathing.

The man sees the motion. He mutters something in Spanish. She does not understand it. This is what he says:

"Ha! My cold-blooded American has satisfied her thirst with blood. She does not like the coffee."

He goes away, leaving the food upon the small table that forms a part of the furniture of the cell.

The hours creep by; long hours to the unfor-

tunate. Ah! some one at the door. The heavy chains are dropped. The solid bolts shoot back in their sockets. A man enters the cell. She does not recognize him in the semi-gloom. Now he stands in the swath of sunlight that shoots in through the narrow window. She knows him now. She remembers the large, kindly eyes, the thoughtful face, the white hair and mustache of Judge Grey.

He stands before her; the jailer has left them alone.

"I have just come from the house of Arthur Amroyd," he commences gravely. "I have heard the testimony given by the servants at the preliminary investigation."

She makes no reply. She cannot. He has not asked a question; has only made a declaration. She sits upon the cot. He occupies the stool near the table. The sunlight strikes full upon her face. He continues:

"Everything seems much against you, my child. It looks black for you."

She cries out in one word.

"Well!" One word, haughtily spoken, defiantly cried. He looks surprised.

"I have come to hear your story," he says quietly.

She bursts into a bitter, mirthless laugh.

"My story! My story! You would not believe it if you heard it."

"What makes you think so?" He speaks very quietly.

"Because you have heard the others. You admit that it looks black for me."

"My child; I am a judge; an honorable one, I hope. I never judge from hearing one side. The servants say you killed Felix Amroyd." A shudder convulses her frame. He does not seem to notice it but continues:—"that he accused you with his dying breath. I met you for the first time yesterday. I formed an opinion of you at that meeting. I came to the conclusion that some aggravated circumstance caused your action even if you really committed the deed. I have come to hear *your* side of the story."

She does not answer him at once. She cannot bring herself to tell this grave, kindly-looking man the story of her shame. She seems to see the look of horror that will come to his face as he hears her. No; she cannot tell him. She will abide by the consequences of her sin. She will let her punishment come.

"I thank you for your kindness," she murmurs; "but I cannot grant your wish. I cannot tell you my story."

"Say rather you *will* not," he says. "Come; I appreciate the feeling of delicacy, of innate modesty that comes to your mind; but consider; this is a matter of life and death. You are accused of a horrible crime, all the more so, because you, a young girl, hardly more than a child, are supposed to be guilty. Confide in me. Tell me all. I shall not censure you. I may save you."

His voice is almost pleading. Still, she turns from him. He sees she is determined not to grant his wish. He thinks of something else.

"Two days ago I read a cablegram, a message for Felix Amroyd. It stated that the sister and relatives of a lady were on their way to South America. You are that lady. I know it. I knew it the moment I saw you. For the sake of those who love you; those who are even now near you, tell me, so that if there is the slightest chance, I may take advantage of it."

She turns upon him almost fiercely. Her voice sounds hoarse and unnatural as she cries:

"I knew the contents of that message. It was through it that Felix Amroyd met his death. Speak not to me of those who love me. Do not torture me by forcing memory to turn to other thoughts. Am I not suffering sufficiently already?"

She bursts into tears.

He bends over her.

"Poor child;" she hears him murmur; "I pity you."

She brushes away the bitter, scalding tears. She arises and goes from him.

"Why do *you* pity *me?* By what right do you intrude upon my sorrow? Why do *you* wish to benefit me?"

"Because I am a man, in the first place; because I, too, have suffered; because I am the judge who must try you, and if fate decrees pass the sentence upon you."

She shrinks from him. *He* the judge. *He* pass sentence upon her—sentence?

"What sentence?" She speaks the words aloud.

"*The sentence of death.*"

He speaks the words gravely, solemnly.

She scarcely hears him. She feels a heavy blow at her heart.

Death! She die? She so young; but a few short months since, so happy? She pictures the agony of her sister; loving, tender Rose; the grief of Uncle John; the effect it will produce upon all; and with a wild cry, she grasps at the air, as if for support, and falls upon the stone floor of the cell. He hurries to her, just as the clank of the heavy chain announces that the door of the cell is again being opened. He raises her up; a voice speaks behind him:

"Leave her to me. I am a woman. I have suffered. I can bring sympathy and love."

It is she, who had given him the warning upon the avenue. She who had saved his life. Sister Agnes!

He mutely bowed, and left them together.

The unconscious girl, the black-robed sister of charity; and the words came to his lips as he left the cell:

"The greatest of these is charity."

CHAPTER XLIX

A WOMAN'S TENDER SYMPATHY

A faint sigh, a convulsive upheaving of the bosom, and the girl has returned to the world; returned to the full consciousness of her position, hearing the solemn tones of the judge's voice as it pronounces the words, "The sentence of death." They are ringing in her ears, repeating each other with rhythmatic precision, one long, dismal chorus of grave voices.

She shudders and looks up. She is lying upon the stone floor of her cell. Some one is supporting her head. Her eyes catch the look of pity, of tender solicitude, in the eyes of another; not the judge, he is not there; but a woman—a black-robed, white-faced woman, looking down into her face with a look of sympathy and love, that goes to her heart.

"Do not distress yourself," she hears the softly modulated voice murmur. "Rest your head upon my breast; find sweet peace there."

The weary, heart-sick creature closes her eyes and drifts off into refreshing slumber. An hour passes; still she sleeps; while, like a guardian angel, the beautiful, holy face of the other bends over her, ever and anon pressing her lips to the brow of the sleeping girl. The accused one whispers, and the ruby lips part, and like a zephyr comes the word "Mother." She who has never known a moth-

er's love, feels her presence in her dreams. The watcher feels the tears coming to her eyes. She presses her lips once more to the white forehead and the girl wakes.

"You are refreshed by your slumber," murmurs the holy woman.

"Yes; oh, so much." She now arises to her feet. She feels better. Her mind is relieved of the mighty pressure upon it. Her heart is not so heavy. The interior of the dungeon does not seem so gloomy.

The presence of the loving sympathetic face seems to have robbed her position of its horrors. But how came she here? this black-robed sister of love and charity? She asks her. She hears the voice answer in the exquisitely modulated tones, melody that would lull the fevered brain to sweet repose:

"I heard of your condition. I came to help you."

To help her? But how can she? The judge had said that everything seemed against her. All looked black; and yes, he had said that he, the man of kindly ways, loving eyes, must pass the sentence, the terrible sentence of death, upon her.

"Alas! You cannot help me," she cries.

She feels the cool, white hand upon her head. The voice answers:

"Everything is possible with God. I am His emissary. Trust in me. Tell me all, and then we will pray for forgiveness and succor, from the Power that is greater than all earthly ones."

Can she unburden her weary heart to this loving one? Can she tell the story to her?

"You would shrink from me if you knew all," she cried.

"I am a woman," the voice answers. "I have a woman's heart. Fear not. I will not censure. Woman's heart is weak, her nature prone to go astray. Tell me all."

She will. She feels she has found a true friend.

So she tells her story, commencing at the first recollections of childhood days; tells of the quiet, peaceful home among the trees; of kind Uncle John and his faithful wife. On until she comes to the flight from home. Then the listener interrupts her.

"And why did your sister determine upon this hasty flight?"

"I know not; there must have been some grave reason, or she would not have done so."

Then came the story of the struggle for existence, the weary, desperate battle against poverty. She did not spare herself. She told with tearless eyes her meeting with Felix Amroyd; everything, even to the last interview, the tragical ending.

The sister listens attentively. She feels that this girl has told the truth; but will a jury believe this? She has no one to corroborate her statement. No witness to the manner in which the man met his death, save the Almighty. She does not speak her thoughts to the girl. She knows that they would only alarm her.

"And this message from the United States, announces the coming of your sister and relatives?"

"Yes. They must have taken passage soon after my departure."

Then they would soon be here.

"And your uncle's name; is it the same as your own?"

"Yes."

"The papers speak of you simply as Miss Morton. The servants, in their testimony at the preleminary investigation, say that the dying man called you Lillian. Is your name Lillian Morton?"

"No. I have told you so much. I may as well tell you all. My sister thought best to assume fictitious names, so we took the one of Morton.'

"And your real name?"

"Is Lilla Barton."

Barton! Why does the interested listener start at the mention of that name? It is a common one; why should it cause her surprise?

"Your uncle's name." She speaks quickly, eagerly, as if her life hung upon the answer.

"John Barton."

The woman gasps for breath and recoils from the girl.

"John Barton?"

"Yes. Why? Do you know him? Are you ill?" She asks this as she sees the evident distress of the other.

"No, not ill. Only startled. Tell me truthfully;

for Oh, much depends upon your answer. Did your uncle, John Barton, ever reside in Australia?"

"I believe so. I have heard him mention Melbourne."

She looks in wonderment upon the effect of her words. She has forgotten her own sorrow, her despair, in her surprise.

"It must be the same," she hears the sister murmur. "I would ask you more," she says. "What was your father's name?"

"I do not know. I never knew my parents."

"Never knew your parents? Poor child; but you must have heard your uncle speak of them?"

"Never to my recollection."

"Are they dead?"

"They must surely be, or else I should have known them."

True; unless some black mystery hung over the life of the girl.

"One more question. Did your relative ever speak of a brother—a brother who had died long before your birth?" The large thoughtful eyes of the eager questioner are fixed full upon the face of the girl, waiting with bated breath the answer. It comes:

"No. He never spoke of a brother."

A look of disappointment crosses the face of the sister.

"But I think he must have had a brother," continues the girl.

"Why? What makes you think so?"

"In the large Bible which he used for evening prayers, I one day found the record of birth and death of one bearing the same name."

"What was the name? Speak! Can you remember it?"

"Yes. The name was Alonzo Barton."

She springs from her seat to the relief of the sister who has fallen upon the bed, her face buried in the scanty covering. She brings the stone jug of water and offers it to her.

The pale-faced woman arouses herself. The girl is startled by the look in her eyes. She sees the lips move. She knows she is praying, and awed she stands silent before her.

The black-robed sister has recovered her composure. She holds out her arms to the girl.

"Come to me," she murmurs. "Come to me. I have a right to love you. A right that I have just discovered. To think that after all these years I should have discovered one of my kindred. Come to my arms."

The girl clasps her about the neck; the woman of God rains warm kisses upon her upturned face, kisses that thrill the young creature to her soul. She does not understand it; she cannot see through it all.

At last the strange woman puts her from her. Rises and goes to the door of the cell.

"You are going to leave me?" cries the girl.

"Yes; but not for long. Remain here for a short time only. I shall return soon. You shall not stay

here. I will have you removed to another, a holier place, where I can watch over you. You shall be saved. You must not perish."

She has signaled for the jailer. There is a means of doing so from the inside, and now the door opens.

Once more pressing the girl to her bosom, the holy woman passes out of the cell, leaving behind her that which she came to bring—peace, comfort, hope. Taking with her that which had been buried in the past for years, filial love, happiness.

CHAPTER L

SHE IS THE CHILD OF MY SON

Judge Andrew Grey had gone directly to his office upon leaving the prison. The refusal of the girl to confide in him made his heart heavy. He had felt attracted toward her in a most singular manner, and instead of feeling that loathing and horror toward her that the history of her crime seemed to have created in the minds of all who heard of it, he pitied her, believing her innocent of the deed, or brought to it by the most aggravating circumstances. As he had told her, everything looked black for her. The servants of Arthur Amroyd each condemned her. They were as one in their testimony as to the last words of the dying man, and that testimony was sufficient to condemn her to death, or to life-long imprisonment.

"If she is found guilty, I shall be obliged to pass sentence upon her," he muttered as he sat before his writing table, revolving the subject in his mind. "They call me a righteous judge. I have never been known to relent. I cannot hesitate if the jury pronounce her guilty; but I would rather my tongue be paralyzed than speak the words that condemn that child."

A noise at the door.

His assistant.

"Well, Pedro?"

"It is court time, your honor. I come for you."

With an involuntary sigh the man arises from his chair and follows the young man.

The distance to the court room is not great, and he is soon sitting upon the bench to pass judgment upon those unfortunates brought before him.

Several minor cases are disposed of, until, finally, the last one on the docket is brought to his notice.

"Miguel Banca," is called.

A dark-skinned, sullen-looking, burly Portuguese. He has been caught in the act of breaking into a jewelry establishment. He is a dangerous customer, has tried to evade arrest, is known as a professional burglar, and would not hesitate at murder.

So says the prosecuting attorney. Andrew Grey hears the history of the fellow; a dangerous man, truly. The public will be benefited by his removal from active life.

But the judge does not pass sentence that day. Why? Because the wife of the brute, a delicate-

looking little woman, stands near him, holding a little baby in her arms, and the guilty father presses it in his arms once during the trial, and kisses it.

"He loves his child," flashes through the mind of the judge. "I will put over his sentence until the next court."

The next court—one week from this day. At that court will be tried the girl murderess, as the papers put it.

He announces his decision, and adheres to it, despite the remonstrances of the prosecuting attorney. The man flashes a look of gratitude from out his dark eyes, and is then taken back to the jail.

The judge goes to his office. He does not go home for his lunch. He eats it at his office or at some one of the numerous restaurants in the vicinity. He is engaged in this employment when Pedro announces a visitor.

"Admit him," he answers, thinking it some one on official business. Few people call there upon any other.

But the visitor is not a man. It is a woman, and a woman whc has occupied his thoughts for the past few days.

Sister Agnes!

She enters hesitatingly. With an involuntary gesture he throws a napkin over his repast and offers her a chair.

She accepts it and remains silent. He stands waiting for her to begin. She does so.

"You are a man of mercy," she says.

"I hope so."

"Your reputation is one of unerring integrity; you are known for your just decisions, and unrelenting judgments."

"I do my duty."

"And yet I know you can be merciful. Your eyes are kindly. Your face sympathetic."

"I am never deaf to an appeal."

"I come to you in behalf of one I know to be innocent of crime. One that must soon be brought before you."

"I know whom you mean."

"She must be saved."

"Believe me, sister, when I say that I am willing to do anything in my power to further her salvation."

"I knew it; I felt it! I have just come from her. I have heard her story. She is innocent."

"If she can only prove it." He speaks gravely.

"I will relate the occurrence. You will then understand it."

She tells him of the cause of Felix Amroyd's death, tells him of his base action, and Andrew Grey believes the story.

"I imagined something of the kind," he says. "I saw the cablegram upon its arrival, or rather delivery to the father. I knew there was something wrong. He deserved his fate." This last he mutters to himself.

"I also wish to ask if it is possible to remove her from the dreary prison where she is now confined.

I will take her beneath the roof of my home, the convent of St. —. She will be better there, and just as safe."

"I may be able to arrange the matter. You will be responsible for her?"

"You ask that question from the official side of your character. As a man you know she could be trusted abroad in the streets of Buenos Ayres."

He flushes.

"You are right," he says, and writes an order for the transfer of the girl prisoner.

She takes it thankfully, and is about to leave. He detains her.

"Sister Agnes, will you answer me one question?"

"If I can."

"You noticed my agitation the night you saved me from the assassin's knife?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever thought what caused it?"

"I have given it no serious thought."

"Shall I tell you?"

"If you choose."

"And if I do will you explain to me one thing?"

"Again I say, if I can."

"Then listen: In the years gone by I loved—a wife, children. A horrible circumstance caused our separation. I have never see that wife, or those children since. I met you face to face, for the first time that night. I gazed upon your countenance in surprise, bewilderment, joy. *Yours is the face of my*

wife. You tell me you have been here twenty-eight years. Is this true?"

She colors under his gaze.

"I never tell an untruth, Judge."

He feels rebuked.

"Your question?" she asks.

He does not seem to hear her for he says:

"Your name, even, is that of her whom I lost—Agnes."

"A coincidence, perhaps."

"More. I believe there is some mystery underlying all this. I know now you are not she I loved. It cannot be, but I feel as if there was some connecting link between us. Tell me this. Have you ever been wed?"

She turns pale.

"Why cause the dead past to give up its dead?" she wails.

"Answer me. Tell me this."

"Yes." The clear dark eyes fill with pain.

"And your husband?"

"Is dead."

"Have you ever been a mother?"

"Press me not to answer you. Can you not see you torture me?"

"Tell me." The large eyes are pleading.

"Yes, I have been a mother."

"And your children?"

"I never had but one. I have never seen him since when a baby he lay in my arms."

"A son?"

"Yes."

A look of disappointment comes to his face. He had formed a new-found hope in his heart.

"Does he live?" he cried.

"I know not; would that I did."

"Can you not tell me of your life; of that life of long ago; your name when in the world?"

She shakes her head sorrowfully..

"It is not permitted," she murmurs. "My life is buried in the grave of the past. This black veil is the emblem of mourning. I have been created a new creature, purified, better than I was before. This much will I tell you. You have seen my great interest in this girl who now lies in the dark dungeon of your jail; you have heard me declare my belief in her innocence; you have heard me say she must be saved. Shall I tell you why I have thus spoken; why I wish her near me, to be comforted, consoled, made better for another life?"

"Yes—tell me—tell me."

"Because I heard the story of her life from cihldhood up. I found familiar names pass her lips. I know her. *She is the child of my son.* The daughter of him who has never known a mother's love."

He falls back into the easy chair behind him. He passes his hand over his eyes. When he recovers she is gone. He hurries to the door; she is already out of sight.

He returns to the office.

"What mystery is here?" he murmurs. "I must learn this woman's history; I know it affects my life."

CHAPTER LI

THE ARRIVAL OF THE MONTEVIDEO

There is great excitement in Buenos Ayres this day. The English steamer Montevideo, which has been three days overdue, has been signaled, and in an hour the passengers will land. The great trial of the girl murderess, Miss Morton, of Chicago, is to take place, and public excitement runs wild, as they talk it over. Out of the thousands in the South American metropolis, there are but few who believe her innocent. They all declare her guilty, and are eager to hear of the sentence, which will condemn her to pay the penalty of her crime.

The court house has been thronged with curious, crowding people since early morning. It cannot hold them all. Thousands throng the sidewalks, even to the street. The police service is inadequate to the emergency.

The first boats have landed upon the shore, bring ing a number of passengers from the steamer. In a short time all are landed, the last being a young girl and her husband; at least, so one would think to watch the tender solicitude displayed by the young man toward his companion. An old gentleman and a negro servant are also of the party.

They hurry from the boat to a crowd of waiting cabmen.

"Can you direct me to the residence of Felix Amroyd?" asks the old gentleman.

The hackman is an Englishman. He turns a d winks at one of his companions.

"Hit would be ha 'ard matter to do that, sir," he answers.

"Why; is he not known here?"

"'E were, sir; but you see 'e's dead, sir."

"Dead?"

"Murdered by his mistress, sir. The trial takes place to-day."

The quartette look from one to the other. What can this mean?

"Come, my man; make your meaning plain. I understood that Mr. Amroyd was married; in fact, came here with his wife, upon the 'Rio De Janeiro.'"

"Hi tried to make my meanin' plain, sir. Hi told you the facts. The lady what came with 'im shot 'im dead the same night they got 'ere, and she's now hon trial."

"My God!" A groan bursts from the lips of all.

"Drive us to the court house," cried the younger man, and in a minute they are whirled toward the temple of justice. They find it impossible to obtain an entrance. Thousands of people are willing to pay well for the privilege.

An officer is found—they can be found sometimes. To him the young man explains that they are relatives of the girl. They must gain admittance.

"We are willing to pay you for your trouble."

The officer has read the account of the cablegram.

He knows there are relatives coming; so, bidding them wait, he hurries away.

He is gone not over ten minutes. He returns to them, and informs them that they can gain entrance by the private staircase, used only by the judge and lawyers. They will be obliged to stand near the judge's dais. They do not object. They are only too anxious to gain admittance. They follow their conductor up the narrow staircase.

Inside the court room all is breathless attention. The sweltering masses crowded into the narrow confines of the room, do not utter a word of complaint. They are only too glad to be able to get there. The testimony of the servants has been heard. It has not taken long. The prosecuting attorney has addressed the jury. The young girl has related the facts of the death just as they occurred, omitting the story of the man's baseness.

"You mean to say it was an accident?" cries the prosecution.

"Yes, sir. He had the revolver in his hand and it discharged in the struggle."

He subjects her to a rigorous cross examination. He wishes to know what the words of the cablegram meant; why she had come to Buenos Ayres at all.

The poor girl tries to evade his cruel questions which will lay bare her whole history of shame if she answers them. She looks appealingly at the judge. The sister of charity who is sitting beside her also appeals to him mutely.

He speaks;

"The lady is not compelled to reveal her heart to you, sir," he says.

"Well, then, let her prove her assertion," cries the attorney.

"Alas! I cannot," she moans.

Miguel Banca, the burglar, is awaiting his sentence. He has been uneasy during the entire proceedings. Now starting forward as if to speak, as if to say something; then relapsing into his sullen apathy.

The judge pale, white as his hair, looks pityingly upon the face of the girl. She is innocent he feels; but Oh. God! she cannot prove it. Must this fair sweet creature perish?

Silence as profound as the grave reigns. Not one of that immense crowd but feels some slight sympathy toward the unfortunate one. The judge rises from his chair. He is about to address the jury; he is about to instruct them, and bid them render a verdict in accordance with the testimony rendered, recommending the prisoner to their mercy.

There is a slight disturbance to the left of the judge's dais. Some one is having difficulty in forcing an entrance through the private door.

The judge does not notice it. He does not hear it. His heart and soul are filled with pity for the young girl who is so near the verge of destruction.

The white lips moan, but before he can speak a dark figure forces its way through the crowd of lawyers and spectators. The figure of a negro. A ne-

gro who forces his way through the throng and faces the judge. A wavering voice that cries:

"Fo' God's sake, Mr. Al. Don't judge de gal. She am yo' own child!"

The man looks down upon the speaker. The white haired judge. The large, tender eyes fill with a look of terror and surprise. He sees not the look of amazement upon the faces of those present. Sees not the startled face of sister Agnes, who has half risen from her place by the side of the prisoner. Sees only the beseeching face of the negro, a face that he recognizes. Only gasps out the one word:

"Jupiter!"

His own child. How can it be possible! His own child before him, on trial for her life, and he the judge!

He stares in blank bewilderment upon the face of the faithful servant, the servant who knows all; who has been a companion in the days of old. Then all grows black before his eyes. He wavers and sinks into the chair behind him. He has fainted.

The officers remove the intruder. He struggles, but in vain.

The associate judge, a Spaniard, rises to address the jury, while two of the lawyers, intimate friends of Judge Grey, endeavor to return him to consciousness.

The associate demands silence, as the court room is a scene of confusion. Order is restored with some difficulty; but all is quiet in a short time.

"Gentlemen of the jury:" the Spaniard speaks.

"You have heard the testimony. The prisoner at the bar has proclaimed her innocence, but cannot bring corroborative evidence of the truth of her statement—"

He is interrupted at this juncture; interrupted by the sudden movement of the dark-skinned burglar, Miguel Banca, who jumps to his feet and cries aloud in his native tongue:

"*But I can, Senor Judge!*"

There is great commotion all over the court room. The judge looks in stern displeasure upon the criminal.

"Silence, sir," he commands.

"But I can prove the innocence of Senorita," mutters the man.

"What do *you* know?" asks the prosecuting attorney contemptuously.

"I know the Senorita spoke the truth. Hear me. I am willing to be put on oath."

Judge Andrew Grey has recovered. He hears the fellow's words. He rises with difficulty and resumes his place.

"Let him be heard," he says feebly, but sternly. The oath is administered; the Portuguese speaks:

"On the night of the supposed murder I had broken into the house of Senor Amroyd. I was in search of the plate which the Senor possesses, the finest in Buenos Ayres. I was hiding in a room, intending to wait until the house was quiet and then do my work; when in the room next to me, I heard the sound of angry voices. They were speaking in

English, but I understand the language. I looked through the keyhole of the door and saw the Senorita and him who was killed. I heard everything that was said. I saw the struggle, heard the pistol shot, and know that Senor Amroyd was killed by accident."

Silence profound, broken at last by a fervent voice crying aloud:

"Thank God!" A voice from the left of the judge's dais.

"Why have you not spoken before?"

It is the calm voice of Judge Grey which asks the question.

"I thought if it were known that I had broken into the house that I might be suspicioned."

The jury render their verdict without leaving their seats.

"Not guilty."

A murmur of disappointment by some is drowned in a hearty cheer by the majority. The next moment the girl is clasped to the breast of a handsomely dressed lady, and the bystanders hear the word:

"Sister!"

They then see a noble looking venerable old gentleman take her in his arms, holding her tightly, as if fearful of losing her again, and know that the "Montevideo" is in port and that these are the relatives.

In the confusion the white haired judge leaves the room. He must be alone; alone to think. He

does not observe the radiant black face seeking to attract his attention; passes unheeded through the private door, not noticing the form of Jupiter, struggling to reach him.

Court adjourns.

Miguel Banca does not receive his sentence that day.

CHAPTER LII

AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL

With bowed head and trembling steps Andrew Grey proceeds to the hall that leads to the street.

The voice of Jupiter still rings in his ears;

"She am yo' own child;" and yet he leaves her. Leaves her without an embrace; without one fervent kiss. He is in doubt; his brain is not clear as yet. He will go to his office and think.

And Sister Agnes?

She is watching him; she sees him leave the place, and while her charge is sobbing upon the breast of Uncle John, she glides down the stair and follows him. She sees him enter the dingy little office; notices that he does not lock the door, but leaves it half open. She sees the massive head fall forward on the folded arms, and hears the sound of convulsive sobbing.

He is seated before his desk. She is soon beside him; her cool hand upon his burning forehead. "Judge Grey." The voice sounds soft and low.

The noble head rises quickly.

"You; Sister Agnes?"

"Yes, Andrew; I have come to solve a mystery."

"Solve a mystery?" He looks at her with distended eyes.

"I heard the words of the negro, witnessed your agitation. You recognized him. Were his words true?"

"God help me, I know not."

"You told me you had left your wife and children. Were those children girls?"

"Yes—angels in human form."

"Why did you leave them?"

He rises to his feet and paces the narrow confines of his office.

"Why? Oh, God!"

The memory of the past comes to his aching heart. He turns and looks into the kindly, loving eyes; into that face, the face that has haunted him for weeks; the face so like her who has been dead to him for so long.

"You ask me why I left them? Listen; I will tell you. I will reveal to you that which has been buried in the sepultchre of my heart for years. I tell *you* for you have *her* face. I told you this once before. It all came back to me like an overwhelming torrent the night I first saw you." Then, with dry, burning eyes, he tells the story, the story of Albert Greyson and Frances Norton, controlling with a mighty effort the deep, sonorous voice, tightly clutching the lapel of his coat, as if to support himself while doing so.

She listens with mute surprise, sorrow depicted on the white face, tender love in the dark eyes. He finishes:

"I am Albert Greyson. The story is my own. I have told you all. For years I wandered over the earth, through Europe, Africa, Asia. Suddenly, one day, while standing beneath the shade of the pyramids of Egypt, came the memory of one I had known years before. A man who had clasped my hand in friendship, who had said: 'If ever you need a friend, remember me.' The words of General Ferdinand Lopez. I determined to find him. I started for Liverpool at once, and from there came here. My friend made me welcome. I have remained here since. He is now dead; but his friendship will live forever in my memory. Now you know all. Could I have done otherwise? Does my action seem cruel and heartless to you now? Could I remain with that dear wife, that mother I had unconsciously wronged? Could I look upon the innocent faces of my children again?" He speaks almost fiercely.

The black robed woman has risen to her feet, a holy light in her eyes. He has buried his face in his hands, and she can see the manly breast heaving with deep emotion.

She lays her hand upon his head.

"Look up, sad heart. Your story is a heart-rending one; but thank God, *it is not true.*"

He looks at her with wide-staring eyes.

"Not true! What do you mean?"

"You are not guilty of crime. Can you not

guess? Do you not recall my words, the last time I saw you in this very room? I told you I had heard the story of that child then lying in a dungeon; that I recognized part of it; that she was the child of my son. If you are her father *you are my son.*"

He presses his hand to his heart.

Its violent throbbing seems to suffocate him. This his mother? How can it be possible?

"No—no! It cannot be!" he groans.

"You have admitted you are Albert Greyson. The woman you married was *not* Agnes Greyson. I know it; for *I am Agnes Greyson,* formerly Agnes Barton. My husband was Hubert Greyson. You have told me the story of your father's desertion of his young wife; of the sad effect it produced upon the mind of her who was as pure and innocent as the babe she nursed. I know it all, Albert. I am your mother."

He begins to believe her. He sees the eager pleading in the soft eyes of the woman before him; sees the outstretched arms of the mother, who is waiting to be taken to his heart. He does not observe the form of Jupiter standing in the doorway. Jupiter and a stranger. He is about to clasp her to his breast, when that feeling of doubt comes to him again. "If you are my mother, who was she? Frances Norton, my wife?"

"*I can tell you.*" The stranger has spoken and comes toward him. A stranger well along in years. A face wrinkled and old, but a face he has seen before.

"Yes, Albert Greyson. I can explain. Take this loving mother to your heart. Press upon her aged lips a son's kiss, for she *is* your mother. I can prove it."

"And you"—

"Look well upon me. Do you not know me?"

With eager eyes they both scan the time-worn face before them; then as if by inspiration the recognition comes to both.

"*Dr. Roberts!*"

"Yes, Dr. Roberts."

Jupiter speaks; the others are too much overcome to do so.

"I followed yo,' Mister Al. I seed de lady come into de house, an' I were waitin' outside 'til she come out, so I could speak to yo.' De doctah 'cognized me standin' on de sidewalk an' I done tole him yo' was here. We stood in de door an' heard all yo' said."

The mother is clasped in the arms of the son—a son whose hair is whiter than her own; a son who has not felt a mother's kiss in many weary years.

The doctor stands by with averted face. He can explain all. He will do so when the proper time comes. He will not break in upon this scene before him. Jupiter comes to the side of the loved master.

"Yo' hab found yo' mammy, Mister Al. Now come to yo' chillun."

He hears the voice of the friend and servant; friend though black. He turns and clasps his hand.

"True friend—faithful one. You have watched

"LOOK WELL UPON ME. DO YOU NOT KNOW ME?"
—Page 415.

has observed the action of Jupiter and the sister. Although she does not say that she has seen, does not mention the thoughts that have surged through her mind, yet her girlish heart beats strangely.

"She am yo' own child;" Jupiter has said.

She feels that some great surprise is in store for her.

John Barton beams upon all around him. His heart is glad; this kind old man. But one feeling of pain strikes the chords of memory occasionally. The memory of the hackman's jeering words upon the landing.

"Shot by his mistress."

He thinks of this at intervals. The man has not said *wife*. He shudders as he thinks of the insinuation conveyed by the fellow's words.

"She will explain all," he thinks, looking upon the sweet young face; and drives it from his mind.

"Together again!" he cries. "Once more united. Our family circle would be complete if my dear wife were here; and by the way, Jupiter is also absent." He has not missed him until this time; so taken up with the lost one, he has not observed the absence of the faithful servant.

"He is probably taking in the sights of the city," remarks Atkinson, laughingly.

They accept this theory.

Lilla and Rose have gone to the apartment of the latter, upon arriving at the hotel. With many tears

Lilla has told her sister all. She has listened with feelings of sorrow and sweet sympathy.

"Uncle John will turn from me when he knows all," Lilla has sobbed upon her sister's bosom.

"He need never know it all;" and Rose tells her of Blackstone's plan; explains why the cablegram had been sent.

"But two knew the secret of your shame—Mr. Blackstone, and he who is dead. One *will* not speak; the other *cannot.*"

"I cannot deceive kind Uncle John. I have done so too much already."

"Leave it to me, dear sister, I will explain it in such a way that he will not suspect the real truth. Do not fear. Dry your tears, and we will go down to dinner."

Lilla obeys her sister, and we find them at the table. Dinner is over, the table cleared, and with the permission of the ladies Uncle John and the young husband enjoy a smoke. Lilla and Rose are sitting side by side happy to be reunited. Suddenly Rose whispers:

"It is best to have it over with. We can all sleep easier in our minds if it is so. Shall I tell your story?"

Lilla trembles.

"No; not now," she answers. "I am so happy. I dread the effect it will produce."

"It is better, dear," whispers the sister. "Trust in me;" and she crosses the room and sits upon a low stool at John Barton's feet.

"Uncle dear, Lilla has told me all. She is so fearful of telling you that I have taken it upon myself to do so. Will you listen to me now?"

The old man places his hand upon the raven locks. He looks at the shrinking, trembling girl upon the sofa at the farther end of the room, and then at the face of her who sits at his feet. His heart beats rapidly. He desires to hear the story, yet dreads it.

"Proceed," he murmurs at last.

"Shall I leave the room?" cries Charles, rising.

"No. It is nothing but what you can hear. Only the sad tale of a loving heart deceived; a confidence misplaced; a man's base treachery."

He resumes his seat at his wife's words.

In a clear sympathetic voice Rose tells the story of the meeting of Felix Amroyd and Lilla, reserving the character of the place where the meeting took place. Explains that in the innocence of her heart the young girl had placed implicit trust in the villain, and had consented to accompany him to Buenos Ayres, and there marry him at his father's house as he desired. How he had refused to do so, and the sad consequences which followed. John Barton's face grows sad.

"You knew she was not his wife before she left Chicago; you knew this cablegram was to be sent?" He speaks in a tone of sad reproach.

"Yes, dear; but we wished to spare you the knowledge of her weakness, not guilt; only the weakness of a woman's nature;" she cries pleadingly.

"You should have told me all, then. You should not have deceived me, Rose."

He feels hurt; this good old man.

"Forgive me, Uncle John. You were *so* weak, *so* ill. We really thought it best not to do so. See; she is in tears. She is waiting for you to say you forgive her all. You will not censure me for acting as I did. I did it for the best."

She is at his feet. With a quick, impetuous movement Lilla is by her side, her blue eyes raised to the kindly face above her. He hesitates but a moment, and then bids them rise. The next moment they are hanging about his neck.

"It is over," he says. "I forgive you both, my children."

Charles Atkinson wipes a tear from his eye. He is a tender hearted young fellow, this man, Atkinson.

They are interrupted by the sudden entrance of Jupiter. Jupiter with eyes as big as saucers and his decidedly large mouth wide open, displaying a fine set of teeth.

"'Scuse me for interruptin', but its berry deportant, Mister John. I mus' see yo' at onst."

John Barton puts the girls from him with a gentle effort, and rises.

"Speak out, Jupiter," he says. "There must be no secrets here."

"Jist come out yeah a minnit, sah. Den yo' kin come back."

With a puzzled air John Barton follows the serv-

ant. He goes out into the hall. He is gone for some time. When he returns his eyes gleam joyfully. Jupiter follows him into the room.

The old man resumes his seat. He clears his voice.

"My children," he begins. "A moment ago I said there must be no secrets here. At that time I forgot that there *is* a secret which I have kept from you, and which can now be told you. I have kept it buried in my old heart for many years. It was the memory of it that caused me to refuse my consent to the marriage of you, Charles Atkinson, to my niece, Rose. She discovered it by accident. She has told me how it came to her knowledge, told me one night while on our way here. But you, Charles, and you, my tender flower, have never heard it. It has been kept from you. But to-day you shall know all. I am going to lay bare to you the knowledge which has been as a weight upon my heart for so many years; which has caused so much misery, so much suffering."

Breathless with attention, the husband clasping the little hand of his wife, listens. With large wondering eyes, Lilla, the child born to misfortune, drinks in the story of her mother's sad fate, her father's unhappiness.

It is soon told, and the eager listeners sit appalled at the sad history they have heard.

"As I said before, this was the cause of my refusal, the reason why Rose, my darling one, left her home. She felt she could not bring disgrace upon

your honorable name, Charles Atkinson. This is why my dear ones have never known a mother's tender care, a father's love. Is it not sufficient to have produced all that has followed?"

"Horrible! Horrible!" cries Charles Atkinson.

"Truly, if it were true; but thanks to the Ruler of all, it is not."

They rise and stare at him in amazement.

"Not true?" they cry in unison.

"No; not true. Albert Greyson did *not* wed his mother. She whom I looked upon as my niece, the daughter of Alonzo Barton, my brother, was *not* my niece. I never knew it until to-day; until a short time ago; but I am convinced it is so. See! This is my niece, Albert Greyson's mother."

He has extended his hand toward the heavy curtains that separate the room from the one adjoining. They turn and look with eager eyes, with bated breath.

Jupiter draws aside the curtains, and with amazement they see a black-robed figure cross the threshold.

"Sister Agnes!" bursts from the lips of Lilla, and she is upon her breast, that tender, loving breast that has been her resting place in her time of sorrow.

"Sister Agnes," she murmurs, coming forward. "Agnes Greyson, your father's mother, your grandmother, dear children."

Rose goes to her as one in a dream, but is soon clasped in the loving arms. The new-found relative

gently leads them to the sofa. She sits between them.

"Look well upon her face, my children. For hers is the face of your mother. They are strangely alike; but I have not finished. This is a day of many surprises. I have told you that the unhappy father, the grief-stricken, heart-broken husband became a wanderer upon the face of the earth. For years he could not be found, was never heard from. But—hush the beatings of your hearts, my darlings, prepare yourselves to meet him, for he is found. Your father is here."

Again the curtains are drawn aside, again a solitary form crosses the threshold. With open arms he stands.

With a glad cry Lilla recognizes the white-haired judge, and both she and her sister are soon clasped to his heart.

"Thank God for this day," he murmurs.

"Thank God, indeed," repeats John Barton. His eyes are moist; but he has not finished. Father and children sit side by side. The mother who has found her son sits near. The uncle speaks again.

"And now that we are united a happy family, I will introduce him who has been guided by the divine hand of Providence to us this day. This is he who has swept away the clouds and caused the sun of happiness to shine upon us. Doctor Roberts."

With a smile the doctor enters the room, his white hair and aged face impressing all who gaze upon them.

"I am truly thankful that I am the messenger who has brought so much peace; such great joy;" he says, advancing to the center of the apartment. "Purely by accident I have been the means of removing the veil which has shrouded the lives of so many, and in order that you can all clearly understand, I will explain in full, how the terrible mistake occurred, which has been the cause of it all. I have done so already, briefly to you, sir," indicating John Barton; "but I shall do so in full before you all."

Jupiter brings him a chair. He sits in it like one wearied. It is growing dark without and the lights are brought. Then, with the mellow reflection of the lamp shining upon his face, he begins:

"The asylum at B—, where was confined the young wife of Hubert Greyson, was at that time under the management of Dr. George, an able man, but who, during the last years of his management gave signs of decay. He had worked too hard, and the inevitable results followed. I was appointed his assistant and devoted myself heart and soul to the work which had occupied the greater portion of his life. I soon grew familiar with the details, and even with the faces of the patients in the ward under my immediate jurisdiction. One day the doctor said: 'I have not as yet shown you through ward C, where the cases I am the most deeply interested in are situated. Some day you may take my place. I think it advisable to instruct you fully as to all the inmates.' I bowed and followed him,

After directing my attention to several of the most important cases, he called my particular attention to a Mrs. Greyson.

" 'A very interesting case,' he said, and I must confess one that interested me. For the moment my eyes rested upon the sad beautiful face, with the look of unutterable melancholy in the liquid eyes, my heart went out to her. We continued our way through the asylum, and came at last to another department. I started in surprise when I saw the face of one of the inmates. I actually cried aloud in my astonishment. Doctor George observed it. 'This is a Mrs. Atkinson,' he said. 'She resembles Mrs. Greyson very much;' and he told me the sad story of the events which had driven her insane."

At this moment Charles Atkinson interrupted the speaker:

"Excuse me, sir. Was the lady's name Marian Atkinson?"

"The same, sir," with a look of questioning.

"Finish your recital, sir. I am deeply interested;" and the young man makes no further comment.

The doctor continues:

"We had gone but a few steps farther when one of the attendants approached us. 'Excuse me, Doctor; but is Mrs. Greyson upstairs or downstairs to-day?' he asked.

"The doctor laughed.

" 'Upstairs, George,' he answered. I looked at him inquiringly. He answered my look. 'The resemblance between these two patients affords me

a chance for amusement. I change them from one room to another, sometimes putting Mrs. Atkinson in Mrs. Greyson's room and *vice versa*. It puzzles the attendants and affords me much amusement;' and he laughed heartily; a laugh wild in its heartiness. I must confess I felt some amazement at this silly practical joke on the part of such a man. I afterward came to the conclusion that the weakness of his mind caused him to play these pranks, for I saw him perform many childish tricks. Poor fellow; he was not responsible. One week from that day he was a helpless imbecile.

"The two patients who bore such a striking resemblance to each other remained in the apartments where I had first seen them until the day they left the institution and my care; Mrs. Atkinson with a father of the Catholic church, Mrs. Greyson, with her uncle, John Barton." Here the doctor turned and smiled at the happy old man, who sat near him.

"Well I remember that night, too," he cried. "I felt decidedly nervous to be in the carriage with an insane person; my wife was more so."

"Yes—yes. You seemed afraid; but to continue: My profession confining me to the house the most of the time preyed upon my constitution, and after several years I was obliged to take a vacation. An old friend living in this very place, Buenos Ayres, had often invited me to make him a visit, so I determined upon a trip to South America. You, sir, know my friend;" to Greyson. "I will not mention

his name." The kind hearted doctor does not wish to mention the name of Amroyd in this happy circle. The judge nods his head as the doctor refers to him.

"We had a glorious time. My friend was a man of great wealth, and in his joy at seeing me, expended large sums in order to make my visit enjoyable. Among the sights of this quaint old town, is the convent of St. —. We visited it among the rest. Here a surprise awaited me, for among the holy women who made the convent their abiding place on earth, I met her who had been known to me as Marian Atkinson. I say known to me, for I found she was *not* Marian Atkinson, but *Agnes Greyson.* Her mind had grown stronger by the change of climate, and the full and complete memory of all her past life had returned to her. Like a flash Dr. George's practical joke came to my mind, and I now knew that the patient who had gone with John Barton was Marian Atkinson, and Agnes Greyson was before me. There is little more to explain. Upon the steamer that carried me to San Francisco I first met Albert Greyson, and her who became his wife. I recognized the face, but the name puzzled me. I did not know Frances Norton, but I understand it all now. I returned to my home, and devoted myself to my profession until failing health again compelled me to give it up for the second and last time. I went abroad, have circled the globe, and only the desire to gaze upon my old friend's face again brought me here. I came just in

time it seems. I was greatly surprised to find my friend the judge here. I had read the account of his sad misfortune while abroad, and knowing that a letter would hardly reach him as he had left his country, I wrote John Barton at Melbourne. It is evident that the letter never reached him."

"It never came to hand," says that gentleman.

"I supposed so, for it explained all that I have just told you."

Silence for a moment, then the father, happy with his loved ones, asks:

"How can you explain the fact that my poor wife at once remembered the facts of her early life when related to her by Uncle John. In his letter to me he stated that she recalled every event when spoken of by him."

"Only in this way can I exlpain it: Her mind was not strong when she left my care. I told Mr. Barton the night that he took her from the asylum that I doubted if she would ever have the full use of it again. Her own life story must have been greatly similar to that of Mrs. Greyson, and as the familiar points struck upon her weak, struggling mind, she took them in and believed them to be her own, as a child learns a lesson."

Charles Atkinson, who has been silent for some time, silent and thoughtful, now speaks.

"Her story *was* much the same. I can explain part of it to you. Marian Atkinson was the wife of my father's first cousin, who deserted her a short time after marriage, a year or so, probably. They

also, were the possessors of a young child, which died a few days after the mother had been taken to your asylum, Doctor. She, also, became insane from the fact of her husband's desertion."

"Strange, that these two, so much alike in face and form, should both suffer in the same way from identical causes," the doctor muses.

Atkinson continues:

"The husband met his death in a railway accident, leaving his property to his child. As the child was dead and the mother likely to share the same fate, my father set about finding the nearest relative on the wife's side, and found that she was related to the family of Rodneys, of which Henry Rodney was the descendant. He wrote him, and received an answer dated Manitou Springs, Colorado, in which Rodney stated that he was coming east soon, and would attend to the matter. He never came, and the vast property is even now held in trust by me."

"And as Rose and Lilla Greyson are Marian Atkinson's children, they are entitled to it," shouts the doctor, leaping to his feet as quickly as his age will permit. They are a happy party that night. Never has Albert Greyson felt so proud, so filled with joy, as now that he sits surrounded by those who love him; those he loves. Jupiter stands grinning behind his master's chair, as happy as any of them. He has seen much sorrow in this family. He begins to think that the tide has turned and only sunshine and happiness will now attend them.

Ever and anon the black-robed woman presses her lips to the high, white forehead of the son she has found, while her soft voice whispers:

"My boy—my son;" and the son looks up into the sweet face and answers:

"My mother;" then clasping close his new-found treasures he adds:

"My children. Thank God for all his mercies."

CHAPTER LIV

THE END OF ALL

Scene—John Barton's happy home. Month, December. Time, 4:15 p. m. A bright fire crackles in the large, open fireplace. It is growing dark, but the lights have not yet been brought, the glare of the huge blazing logs being sufficient to give all the illuminating power necessary. There is a merry group before the fire. We will take the liberty to look in their faces and see if we know them. First that bent, white haired form sitting close to the cheery oak fire. We can recognize in those kindly eyes one we have known from the very first chapter of our history. It is John Barton. John Barton not as we knew him then, for he is alone now. His companion through life has gone before. He misses her quiet smile and gentle voice. She has nobly fulfilled her duty on earth. She has indeed been a helpmate, God's best gift to man, so seldom appreciated; a good wife.

Next him, with his manly form convulsed with laughter at the struggling efforts of a wee baby to pull her pussy's tail, as she lies upon the hearth, is Albert Greyson, now a grandpa, for the child is the first born of Rose and Charley. They sit near the light of a parent's first tender love in the eyes of each.

Sitting behind Uncle John is a happy smiling woman whose hair, not yet white, is neatly smoothed back under a neat cap. The face is not so white as when we last saw it. The expression of the eyes is changed. Then it was holy submission, a heart resolved to bear up under a life's sorrow, a resolve to alleviate the sufferings of others, that in the joy of seeing surcease from sorrow in them her own might be forgotten.

Sister Agnes, but Sister Agnes no longer. She has served her Maker faithfully, for over a quarter of a century in the black robes of her church. Her declining years will be spent in rendering homage and service surrounded by those of kindred; teaching them the right path. It has cost her a pang to give up her holy calling, but she is a woman, she is a mother; she has a mother's heart. The door leading to the veranda opens, and with a cheery laugh enters our old friend, Dr. Roberts. He has settled in the neighborhood.

"Must look after the family, you know," he says. He holds an open newspaper in his hand.

"No light yet?" he shouts; "here, I want to show you something in to-day's paper. Guess the fire-

light is strong enough;" and falling into a chair he leans over, so as to allow the firelight to reflect upon the paper, and reads:

"The public will doubtless be pleased to hear that that arch-scoundrel, T. Smith Chatwood has at last met with his just deserts. That indefatigable detective and all-round good fellow, William Blackstone, has been upon his track for the past year and has finally got him on the hip. He was sentenced to-day to two years in Joliet, and with hearty good will we cry: "Good riddance to bad rubbish." A reporter saw the smiling and genial detective soon after the sentence was passed.

"You stuck to him," he remarked.

"Yes, I had it in for him for some time. I got him at last."

"What do you propose to do now?"

"Oh, let him go; look out for others of his class; but excuse me, my wife is waiting for me at home; she will be anxious to hear the news;" and he left the reporter standing on the curbstone. Blackstone has not been married long, and so he has not become a case-hardened husband yet. Our readers will remember we published an account of his marriage to Miss Lilla Greyson, youngest daughter of Albert Greyson, some six months since.

"So they've got him at last," comments Uncle John. "Truly a good riddance."

Andrew Greyson is living a quiet private life. He has no official aspirations now. He is content with home and home comforts. He reads the papers from Buenos Ayres. In one of them he found the death of Arthur Amroyd recorded. He did not long survive his erring son. The last official act of the judge was to pardon Miguel Banca.

When censured for this he said: "He loves his child, and any man who really loves his kind cannot be wholly bad."

A wise judge.

It is growing quite dark.

Jupiter brings in the lights.

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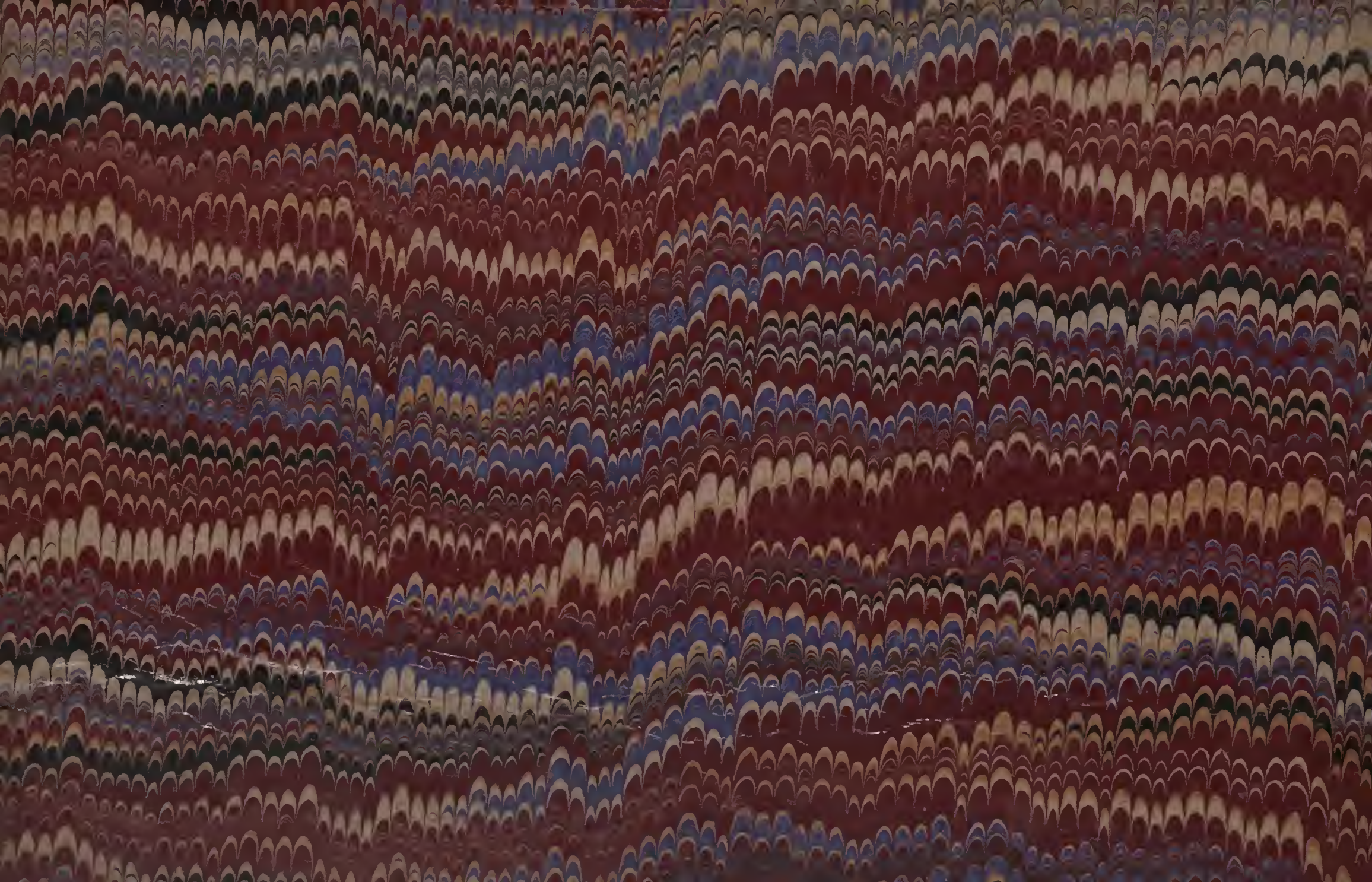

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